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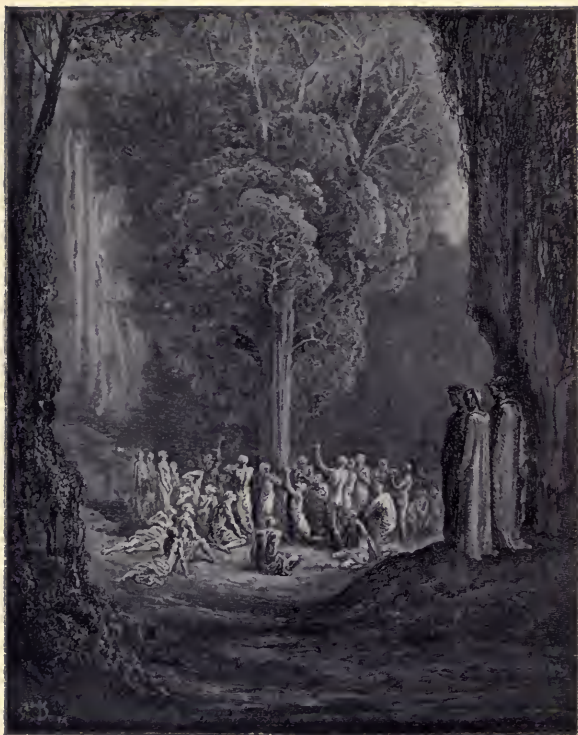
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DANTE



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Gustave Doré

THE MYSTICAL TREE

Purgat. xxiv. 112-117

DANTE

THE DIVINA COMMEDIA AND CANZONIERE

Translated by the late

E. H. PLUMPTRE D.D.

Dean of Wells

WITH NOTES, STUDIES AND ESTIMATES

IN FIVE VOLUMES

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THE DIVINA COMMEDIA

VOL II PURGATORY

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PURGATORY

CANTO I

*Invocation—The Beauty of the Skies—Cato of Utica—The
Cleansing of the Pilgrim's Face—The New Girdle*

FOR fairer waters now before the wind
Her sails my spirit's little boat doth spread,
Which leaves so dark and stern a sea behind;
And I will sing that second realm instead,
Wherein man's spirit frees itself from stain, 5
And groweth worthy Heaven's high courts to tread.
Let Poesy, that was dead, rise again,
O holy Muses, since that yours am I,
And let Calliope lift up her strain, 10
Following my song with that sweet melody 10
Which smote the wretched pies, and made them own
All hope of pardon passed for ever by.
The orient sapphire's hue of sweetest tone,
Which gathered in the aspect, calm and bright,
Of that pure air as far as Heaven's first zone, 15

¹ The opening lines breathe a sense of relief in passing from the horrors of the Inferno to the milder clime of Purgatory. That relief would hardly have been felt had Dante adopted the traditional belief of the Schoolmen (Lomb. *Sent.* iv. 45A; Aquin. *Summ.* iii. 69), which placed Purgatory in close neighbourhood to Hell, like it in its torments, save that here the torments were remedial. With an almost startling boldness, Dante devises a Purgatory of his own, a solitary mountain rising from the waters, which, in his geography, were believed to cover one whole hemisphere of the earth, and crowned with the earthly Paradise.

² The image was a favourite one. Comp. *Sonn.* 32; *Conv.* ii. 1; *Par.* ii. 1-9, xxiii. 67.

³ The invocation of Calliope is an echo of *Æn.* ix. 525; *Met.* v. 338-340.

⁴ The nine daughters of Pierius, king of Thessaly, challenged the nine Muses to a trial of skill, and chose to sing the praises of the Titans who warred against Jupiter. The end was that they confessed themselves conquered, and were changed into magpies (*Met.* v. 294-678).

⁵ The oriental sapphire was that which was held by jewellers in higher esteem than others. Its colour was recognised as the symbol of Hope.

Now to mine eyes brought back the old delight,
 Soon as I passed forth from the dead, dank air,
 Which eyes and heart had veiled with saddest night.
 The planet whence love floweth, sweet and fair,
 Clothed all the orient with a smiling grace, 20
 Veiling the Fishes, that her escort were.
 I to the right hand turned, my mind to place
 On th' other pole, and four stars there beheld,
 Ne'er seen by any but man's primal race ;
 From their bright flames o'er Heaven a new joy welled. 25
 O widowed clime of this our northern sphere,
 From sight of these by Nature's law withheld!
 When I had ta'en my leave of gazing there,
 A little turning towards the other pole,
 Where I had seen the great Wain disappear, 30
 I saw, hard by, an old man standing sole,
 Worthy of so much reverence in his mien,
 More could no father claim of filial soul.

Hence, perhaps, it was chosen specially for Bishops' rings. *Exod.* xxiv. 10 may have been in Dante's thoughts.

¹⁵ The first circle is that of the moon, as nearest the earth (*Par.* ii. 30). The whole scene is that of a cloudless Easter-tide morning on the Mediterranean.

¹⁹ The star is the planet Venus, the symbol, as in *Par.* viii. 1-12, at once of human and Divine love, seen now as the Morning Star. Astronomical calculations have shown that Venus at the end of March 1300 would rise after the sun (*Phil.*), and the Fishes before it; but it is scarcely worth while examining the poet's description by the test of science.

²³ The four stars are probably a reminiscence of what Dante had heard from Marco Polo, who was in Venice from 1295 onward, or from some other oriental travellers at Genoa or Pisa, or what he had read in the writings of Arabian geographers or astronomers, of the constellation known as the Southern Cross (*Humb.* ii. 667). Here they are symbols of the four cardinal virtues of pre-Christian ethics—fortitude, temperance, justice, prudence (*C.* xxxi. 106)—as the three stars of *C.* viii. 89 are of faith, hope, and charity. Both as stars and as virtues they had been seen in their brightness only by Adam and Eve. One may leave, noticed, but not discussed, the view that at the traditional date of the creation, B.C. 4004, they might have been north of the Equator, and that their present position is a result of the precession of the equinoxes. The disappearance of the Wain (*Ursa Major*) may be simply an astronomical note, but possibly there may here also be something to read between the lines. Marco Polo dwells on the strangeness of not seeing the pole-star as he went into southern latitudes, such as Java and Madagascar (*Yule*, i. 265).

³¹ The choice of Cato as the warder of Purgatory appears strange enough.

Long was his beard, and white hairs there were seen,
 Which with his flowing locks agreed in hue, 35
 That o'er his breast fell down, a twofold screen.
 The rays of those four stars, so pure and true,
 Adorned his face with such surpassing light,
 It was as though the sun's face met my view.
 "Who are ye, ye who 'gainst the dark stream's might 40
 Have from the everlasting prison fled?"
 So spake he, shaking reverend locks and white;
 "Who was your guide? What lamp its radiance shed,
 As ye passed forth from out the night's deep gloom,
 Which blackens aye that valley dark and dread? 45
 Are then the laws of that abyss of doom
 Thus broken, or is counsel new in Heaven,
 That ye, though damned, to these my caverns come?"
 Then by my Guide to me a grasp was given,
 And I, by words and hands and many a sign, 50
 To homage of the knee and brow was driven.
 Then answered he, "My coming is not mine;
 A Lady came from Heaven, and with her prayers
 Did him who stands here to my help consign.

As a virtuous heathen, he might have been placed with his wife, Marcia, in the *limbus* of *H. ii.*; as a suicide, he might have been doomed, like Peter de Vineâ, to the seventh circle of Hell (*H. xiii.* 58); as an enemy of Cæsar, he might have gone yet lower down. Lucan, however (probably also the single reference in *Æn.* viii. 670), had obviously impressed Dante's mind with a profound admiration for Cato as one of the great heroes of the ancient world. He had chosen death rather than the loss of liberty (*Mon.* ii. 5). He was worthy, more than any man, to be a type of God, whose call he obeyed even in the manner of his death. Marcia's return to him was a parallel of the soul's return to God (*Conv.* iv. 28). That last thought, over and above a certain sense of likeness in character and fortune, presents the point of contact with the position which Dante assigns to him. He became the representative instance of the law of *Acts* x. 35.

³⁴ The illumined face and beard are clearly symbolic of the measure in which Cato had been, as it were, transfigured in Dante's mind by the four natural virtues. Such a man, as having been a law unto himself (*Rom.* ii. 14), might well be the warder of the Mountain in which souls were to recover their lost natural righteousness, and made meet for the supernatural.

⁴¹ Cato apparently had seen the pilgrims as they emerged from the cavern pathway that led from the abyss (*H.* xxxiv. 133), but he takes them for lost souls who, contrary to the law of *Matt.* v. 26, perhaps also of *H.* iii. 9, had effected their escape.

⁵² We note the fulness and courtesy of Virgil's answer to Cato, as con-

But since it is thy will to know how fares 55
 It with us, fully and in very deed,
 My will to say thee 'Nay' in no wise cares.
 Not yet is he from life's last evening freed,
 But through his madness came to it so near, 60
 He had but few short moments to recede.
 So, as I said, 'twas mine this charge to bear,
 To rescue him, nor was there other way
 Than this by which I came and now am here.
 'Twas mine the race accursèd to display,
 And now I purpose he those souls should know 65
 Who here are cleansed beneath thy sovran sway.
 How I have led, 'twere long to thee to show ;
 But power that helps me doth from Heaven descend,
 That he may thee by sight and hearing know.
 Him on his course I pray thee now befriend ; 70
 He wanders seeking freedom, gift men bless,
 As he knows well who life for her doth spend ;
 Thou know'st it, since death lost its bitterness
 In Utica, where vesture thou didst leave,
 Which the Great Day in glorious sheen shall dress. 75
 The eternal laws from us no wrong receive ;
 He lives, and Minos lets me roam at will ;
 I of that circle am where yet doth live
 Thy Marcia with chaste eyes, who seemeth still,
 O holy heart, to pray thee take her back ; 80
 For her love's sake then this our wish fulfil.

trasted with his simple assertion of Divine power in his reply to Charon (*H.* iii. 95).

⁶⁸ The thoughts of natural and spiritual death are intermingled in the lines that follow. For the whole passage, comp. *H.* ii. 52-108.

⁷² The liberty which Dante was seeking was spiritual ; that for which Cato died political ; but here also the two thoughts overlap one another. Cato had lived not for himself, but for the whole world. (*Conv.* iv. 27 ; *Mon.* ii. 5.)

⁷⁵ The words seem almost to imply the admission of Cato to the regions of the blessed, and, looking to the position of Rhipeus in *Par.* xx. 68, this is, at least, possibly Dante's meaning. If not, we must think of him as including the virtuous heathen in the words of *Dan.* xii. 3, even though they are not admitted to the supreme beatific vision.

⁷⁹ Marcia (*H.* iv. 128) had been first Cato's wife, was separated from him,

Let us our way through thy seven kingdoms track,
 And of thy favour I will her apprise,
 Wish for remembrance there thou canst not lack."
 "So great the joy that Marcia gave mine eyes
 While I in yon world lived," then answered he,
 "That every wish I met as it did rise ;
 Now that beyond that evil stream dwells she,
 She can no longer move me, who obey
 That law which passed when I was thence set free."
 But if a heavenly Lady guides thy way,
 As thou dost tell, there needs no flattering speech ;
 Let it suffice thee in her name to pray.
 Go then, and gird thou this man, as I teach,
 With a smooth rush, and see thou cleanse his
 face,
 So that each stain that lingers there thou bleach ;
 For 'twere not meet his eye with any trace
 Of cloud and mist to that first Angel go,
 Of those who have in Paradise their place.
 This little island all around, below,
 There, where the billows beat upon the shore
 On the soft ooze, bids reeds and rushes grow ;

returned to him in old age with the freshness of her first love, and sought that

Liceat tumulo scripsisse Catonis
Marcia. —*Luc. ii. 341.*

This, as said above, is taken by Dante as an allegory of the soul's return to God (*Conv. iv. 28*).

⁸⁸ The evil river = Acheron (*H. iii. 78*).

⁸⁹ The "law" implied seems to be that which separated Cato from the other souls, who, on the descent into Hades, were placed in the *limbus*, while he was made warder of the Mountain of Cleansing, to which none, before that date, had been admitted. The husband and the wife, in the inscrutable decrees of God, had to remain in the place assigned to each, and the ties that had united them were broken.

⁹⁵ Remembering *H. xvi. 106*, we trace a profound meaning in the new symbol ; Dante had cast aside the "cord" of an outward ascetic rule. He is now to gird himself with the low-growing pliant rush, as the emblem of humility (*1 Pet. v. 5*). And, as he does this, he is to wash, not his feet (as in *John xiii. 5-12*), but his face. The contemplation of evil and its punishment leaves a stain and a dimness which are adverse to the soul's purity, and to the clearness of vision which is the condition of seeing God. On the symbolism of the rush, see Rusk. *M. P. ii. 232*.

⁹⁹ The "first minister" is the pilot-angel of *C. ii. 43*.

No other plant that leaves and branches bore,
 Or hardened grew, could there its life sustain,
 For they yield not as each stroke passeth o'er. 105
 Then by this way return ye not again :
 The sun, now rising, will direct you well
 The mountain's height with easier climb to gain."
 Then vanished he ; and not a syllable
 I spake, but rose, and backward then I sped, 110
 Close to my Guide, with gaze that on him fell.
 He then began : " My son, in my steps tread ;
 Let us turn back ; on this side slopes the plain,
 By slow descent to its low boundaries led." 115
 Near was the dawn its triumph bright to gain
 O'er morning's mist that vanished, so that I
 Knew from afar the trembling of the main.
 Along the lonely plain our feet we ply,
 As one who finds the pathway he had missed,
 And deems till then he wanders fruitlessly. 120
 When we had reached the point where dews resist
 The sun's heat most, and being where the shade
 Is falling, slowly vanish into mist,
 Then both his hands upon the grass outspread
 My Master placed, with sweetness wonderful ; 125
 And when his meaning was to me conveyed,
 I turned to him my cheeks, where tears fell full ;
 Then to my face he did the hue restore
 Which Hell had hidden, and left veiled and dull.

103 The natural man prides himself on resisting the adverse blasts of fortune (as Dante himself seems to do), but true humility sees in them the discipline appointed by the Divine will and submits (*Par.* xvii. 23).

115 The *ora* of the Italian stands for *aura*, not *hora*. The dawn scatters the early mist and shows the trembling of the waters. Line 117 is an echo of the *splendet tremulo sub lumine pontus* of *Æn.* vii. 9. The "innumerable smile" of *Æsch. P. V.* was, of course, unknown to Dante.

119 We note the parallelism of contrast with *H.* i. 3.

129 The almost maternal tenderness of Virgil (*H.* xxiii. 38, xxiv. 20) is again seen. The highest office of a noble poet, as a "schoolmaster leading to Christ," is to cleanse the soul from some, at least, of the stains of evil, and so prepare the way for a more thorough purification.

So came we down upon the desert shore,
Which ne'er saw man upon its waters sail,
Who then retraced the path he thus passed o'er.
There, as that other bade, he did not fail
To gird me, and—O wonder!—for as fast
As he those rushes gathered, weak and frail,
There, where he plucked, they sprang ere moment
passed.

CANTO II

*The Dawn—The Angel Pilot and his Freight of Souls—
Meeting with Casella*

THE sun already had the horizon gained,
Whose full meridian circle covers o'er
Jerusalem, with highest point attained ;
And night, whose path wheels where his went before,
Forth from the Ganges with the Scales uprose,
Which she lets fall when reigning high once more,
So that Aurora's beauteous cheeks disclose,
From where I stand, the white and crimson sheen,
Now passing with the hours to orange glows.

¹³² Possibly there is a reference to the voyage of Ulysses as told in *H.* xxvi. 142.

¹³⁵ We are reminded of the "*primo avulso non deficit alter*" of *Æn.* vi. 143. Here it becomes the type of the inexhaustible power of Divine grace, which gives lowliness to all who seek it, even when it works through human wisdom.

¹ It is the morning of March 27th or 26th (Easter Monday or Easter Day). The Mount of Purgatory is the antipodes of Jerusalem, and the two have therefore a common horizon (*H.* xxxiv. 112). It is nightfall on the Ganges, sunset at Jerusalem, early morning on the mountain. Dante assumes that Jerusalem lies midway between the Ganges and the Pillars of Hercules (*C.* xxvii. 3). The Scales are the constellation *Libra*, which is in the meridian at the vernal equinox at midnight, and at the autumnal equinox sets at 9 P.M. The Scales then fall from the hands of Night, when the nights are longer than the days. We note, as before on *H.* xi. 113-115, the poet's elaborate description of a very simple fact.

⁷ The description, like that of *C.* i. 116, indicates the keen observation of

Still lingering by the sea our steps did lean, 10
 As those who on their way move pensively,
 Who go in heart, and yet with loitering mien.
 And lo! as when the morning draweth nigh,
 Through the thick vapour Mars grows fiery red,
 Down in the west, where ocean's wide plains lie, 15
 It chanced—so may its beams on me be shed
 Once more!—a light across the sea so flew,
 No wing of bird more rapidly had sped.
 From which as I my gaze awhile withdrew
 To ask my Leader questions yet again, 20
 I saw it, as it brighter, fuller grew;
 And then on either side there did appear
 I knew not what of white, and then below
 Came forth another slowly, and drew near.
 My Master for a while did silent go, 25
 While those white objects now as wings we saw,
 Then, when that pilot he began to know,
 He cried, "Haste, haste, and bend thy knee in awe;
 Behold God's angel; fold thou then thine hands;
 Now shalt thou see such ministers of law. 30
 See how above man's instruments he stands,
 So that he needs nor oar, nor other sail
 Than his own wings, between such distant lands.
 See how he points them heavenward, nor doth fail
 With his eternal wings to fan the air; 35
 Nor, as with mortal plumes, does change prevail."

the phenomena of the changes of an Italian dawn in spring—first the white and vermeil tints, then the deeper orange.

¹³ The readings vary: (1) *su'l presso*, (2) *sol preso*, (3) *sul preso*, and others. I follow (1). Another actual reminiscence of Mars seen in the west, while Venus was rising in the east. On Mars, see *Par.* xiv. 94-102; *Conv.* ii. 14. In the latter passage Dante mentions that fiery vapours in the form of a cross were seen near Mars at Florence in the beginning of her troubles.

²⁸ Various readings give *aperser*, *apparver*, and *apparser*.

³⁰ Another contrast with the journey through Hell. There Dante had seen only lost souls and demons. Now he is to see the angels of God on their ministries of service.

³¹ The boat moves without oars or sail or other instruments (this is clearly the meaning of *argomenti*), solely by the volition of the angel. Comp. the

Then as he nearer drew to where we were,
 That bird of God in clearer light was drest,
 Wherefore mine eye that near sight could not bear,
 But down I bent it. Then he came to rest 40
 Hard by the shore, with boat so quick and light,
 It barely skimmed the waves that round it pressed.
 The heavenly pilot on the stern upright
 Stood, with all blessing on his look enrolled,
 And in it sat a hundred spirits bright. 45
 Then "*Israel de Egypto*" heard I told,
 As with one voice they chanted out their lay,
 With all the psalm doth afterward unfold.
 Then on them he the cross's sign did lay,
 And they all threw themselves upon the shore, 50
 And quick, as when he came, he went his way.
 The crowd there left behind, as not before
 Familiar with the region, gazed around,
 As one who seeketh new things to explore.

Canzone, "*voi che intendendo . . .*" and the comment on it in *Conv.* ii. 14. So also *Par.* i. 103-126.

³⁸ The use of "bird" as applied to the angel may have come from Statius, who applies "*ales*" and "*volucer*" to Mercury (*Theb.* i. 492; *Silv.* i. 2, 102).

⁴³ The angel is, so to speak, the Charon of Purgatory, and his boat that of which Charon had spoken (*H.* iii. 93). The boat has come, it will be remembered, from the mouth of the Tiber (l. 101).

⁴⁴ The *v. l. faria* for *parea* gives the suggestive thought that even to hear the report of the angel's majesty would be as a foretaste of the blessedness of Heaven.

⁴⁶ The words strike the keynote of the *Purg.* The hymns, psalms, and anthems of the Church, with the music which was their fit accompaniment, are as much the characteristic of this part of the *Comm.* as groans and sighs and thunder are of the *Inf.* Ps. cxiv., which meets us here, has the interest of having been specially chosen by Dante himself as a representative instance of the fourfold method of interpretation (*Conv.* ii. 1). In the letter, it is simply historical; allegorically it typifies redemption, morally conversion; anagogically (for which, perhaps, our "mystically" is the best equivalent), the exodus of the soul from the bondage of corruption to the glorious liberty of the sons of God (*Ep. Can Grande*, 7). The addition in *v.* 48 is to be noted. We must read the whole Psalm (the last verse especially) mystically in order to understand what Dante read into it. It may be noted that the Psalm had been from the sixth century in use in the Western Church in the last offices for the dying and in the burial of the dead (*Mart.* iii. 15, 381, 403; *Mask. M. R.* i. pp. 105, 118). Dante may have heard it at the death of father or mother, or in the Church of S. Lucia by

The sun's bright darts were speeding with quick
 bounds, 55
 Those shafts with which, as weapons bright and
 keen,
 The Capricorn he chased from Heaven's mid-grounds.
 When that new people, with a questioning mien,
 Looked to us, asking, "If the way ye know,
 Show where the path to scale the Mount is seen." 60
 And Virgil answered, "Ye believe, I trow,
 That we have had experience of this place;
 But we are strangers, e'en as ye are so;
 Before you we have come a little space,
 And by another way, so steep and dread, 65
 'Twill seem but sport the ascending path to trace."
 The souls, who clearest proof of me had read
 That I was living, breathing vital airs,
 Now waxed all pale and were astonished;
 And as to messenger who olive bears 70
 The people gather, bent the news to hear,
 And each to trample on the others dares,
 So with fixed gaze upon me they did stare,
 That troop of happy spirits, as if each
 Forgot the cleansing that should make them fair. 75
 And one I saw before the others reach,
 As if to embrace me, with such warmth of love,
 It did my heart like action promptly teach.

the grave of Beatrice. It was also used at Vespers every Sunday, Easter-day included (*Brev. Rom.*). Comp. a beautiful hymn, "In the going forth from Egypt," by the Rev. Canon Bright, D.D.

⁵⁷ The time indicated is reckoned by commentators at from half an hour to two hours after sunrise.

⁷⁰ The old Greek and Roman custom which placed wreaths of olive on the brow, or a branch in the hand, of the messenger of peace or victory, seems to have lingered on through the Middle Ages (*Soph. Ed. R.* 80-82; *Æn.* viii. 116, xi. 100). A picture had been painted by Mr. F. W. Topham, "A Messenger of Good Tidings," representing a horseman bearing on high a branch of olive as he brings news of relief to Florence in 1496 (*H. W. P.*) The newly arrived souls gaze on the living man whom they see on landing, as the crowd at Florence or Verona gazed on such a messenger. Wonder passed into sympathy, sympathy to love.

O ye who, save to sight, mere shadows move!
 Three times around it I my hands did fold, 80
 Thrice on my breast did those hands empty prove;
 My looks, I trow, my thoughts of wonder told;
 For then the spirit smiled and back did flee,
 And I in zeal to follow him waxed bold.
 Sweetly he bade me stay, and tranquil be: 85
 Then knew I who he was, and made my prayer
 That he would halt awhile to speak with me.
 He answered me, "As thou of old wast dear
 To me i' the flesh, so art thou, now I'm freed;
 Therefore I stop. But wherefore com'st thou here?" 90
 "Casella mine! that I once more may speed
 This path again, my journey now is made,"
 Said I; "but why was such delay decreed?"
 And he: "No cruel wrong on me is laid,
 If he who takes both when and whom he will 95
 Hath many a time my passage here gainsaid,

⁷⁹ The souls of the saved seem thought of as clothed in a quasi-corporeal form, more subtle than those of the lost (*H.* vii. 111, xxix. 75). The lines that follow are a direct reproduction of *Æn.* vi. 699-701.

⁹¹ But one solitary record—a note to a madrigal by Lemmo di Pistoia in the Vatican, that it was set to music by Casella—remains beyond what Dante tells us of his friend. From Milton onwards (*Sonn. on H. Lawes*), most Dante students have seen in this one of the most charming episodes of the poem, helping us to understand the poet's youth, with all its high aspirations, its love of music and song, its capacity for friendship. The date of Casella's death is unknown, but the text indicates that it was some months, or it may be years, before 1300. The Angel of Purgatory is ever bearing the souls of the dead, who are capable of purification and need it, from the mouth of the Tiber, but takes or leaves at his discretion. Casella, who is, as it were, the Palinurus of the *Purg.* (*Æn.* iii. 202, v. 833, vi. 337), has been often left behind. Dante wonders that he is among the *new* arrivals. The explanation is that he might have stayed still longer, but that the Indulgence proclaimed for the year of Jubilee, beginning from Christmas 1299, had led the Angel to bring all who sought to come. (See the Bull of Boniface VIII. in Boehmer, *Corp. Jur. Canon.* ii. 1192, in *Scart.*) The strange legend as to the Tiber is perhaps a symbol of the dogma *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*. The souls of imperfect Christians wail in the *Ante-Purgatorium*, as penitents, in the ancient discipline of the Church, wailed in the church porch. I have not traced the existence of the belief elsewhere. Had Dante found it at Rome as a new-born mythus engendered by the excitement of the Jubilee, or did he hear it from his friend the Bishop of Ostia?

For all he does is ruled by righteous will.

These three months past he hath been wont to take
 Whoe'er with peace his course would fain fulfil;
 Whence I, who by the shore did sojourn make, 100
 Where Tiber to the salt wave tribute brings,
 Was by him welcomed as for pity's sake.

He to that outlet now outspreads his wings,
 For evermore the souls are gathered there
 Whom no decree to Acheron downward flings." 105

And I: "If no new law from thee doth tear
 The skill or memory of thy songs of love,
 Which used to calm of yore each eager care,
 I pray thee still thy power to comfort prove
 On this my soul, which, with its fleshly mould 110
 O'erburdened, sad and sorrowful doth move."

"O Love, who with my soul dost converse hold,"
 He then began so sweetly to intone,
 That still its sweetness thrills me as of old.
 My Master and I too, and every one 115
 Of those with him, seemed in it fully blest,
 As if their minds could dwell on that alone.

That music did the thoughts of all arrest,
 Fixed and intent; when lo! the old man cried,
 "Ye laggard spirits! why so quick to rest? 120
 What means this? What neglect your feet hath tied?
 Haste to the Mount, and purge the soil away
 Which from your eyes the face of God doth hide."

106 The "new law" indicates a doubt rising out of the words of Cato (C. i. 85-90). Could the disembodied soul renew the memories of the old friendship which was so great a joy on earth?

112 The *Canzone* which thus begins furnishes the subject of the Third Book of the *Conv.* Had Casella set it to music in those bygone days? Could any words paint the effect of such music on a poet's soul better than those of l. 108?

118 "*Eravam*," not *andavam*, is obviously the right reading. Cato reproves the souls for loitering.

122 Beneath the veil of the outward story we read the thought that no memories of the past, however tender, must be allowed to hinder the progress of the soul which is pressing forward to purification.

E'en as the doves who through the meadows stray,
 Gathering or grain or darnel tranquilly, 125
 And not a whit their wonted pride display,
 If aught they see which them doth terrify,
 Will of a sudden cease to seek their food,
 Because a greater care constrains to fly,
 So saw I then that newly gathered brood, 130
 Cease from the song and flee towards the hill,
 As one who goes, nor knows the goal pursued;
 Nor moved we onward with less eager will.

CANTO III

*The Journey to the Mountain of Cleansing—The Souls that
 wait—The excommunicated Manfred*

AND then, albeit that their sudden flight
 Had scattered them through all the wide champaign,
 Turned to the Mount where leadeth Reason right,
 I to my comrade true drew close again;
 And how should I without him e'er have gone? 5
 Who up that mountain would my steps have ta'en?
 He seemed to me within himself to groan.
 O Conscience truly noble, pure, and chaste,
 How keen the pangs by thee for small ills known!
 And when his feet had laid aside the haste 10
 Which robs each gesture of its dignity,
 My mind, till then within itself embraced,

¹²⁵ As in *H.* v. 82, so here, doves furnish the poet with the precise illustration which he needs. *Comp. Par.* xxv. 19.

¹³² Reproduced from *V. N.* c. 13, not perhaps without a reminiscence of Heb. xi. 8. The act of self-surrender to the discipline of purification is one of the ventures of faith.

³ "Reason" is probably that of the human soul purified by Divine grace.

⁴ The sense of companionship and guidance is as strong as ever. But what causes Virgil's haste and remorse? Does human wisdom, sympathising with affection, regret that it had allowed the memories of past days to interfere with the disciple's progress, so as to incur the reproach of the more

Took wider range, as if with eager eye,
 And turned my glance upon the mountain near,
 Which rising from the water seeks the sky. 15
 The sun, which, fiery red, shone on our rear,
 Was broken there before me in the way,
 As on my form its rays were brought to bear
 Unto one side I turned in sore dismay,
 Lest I should be abandoned, when I saw 20
 That before me alone the shadow lay.
 And then my Comfort: "Why this faithless awe?"
 So he began, with face full turned to me,
 "Think'st thou that I my guidance will withdraw?
 'Tis eve already now, where buried be 25
 The members within which I shadows made:
 Naples now hath it, ta'en from Brindisi.
 Now if there fall in front of me no shade,
 Wonder not more than that two separate rays
 Meet in the heavens, yet neither is delayed. 30

stoical Cato? Was this example of the sensitiveness of conscience needed for the poet's inner self?

¹⁶ The redness of the sun indicates that it was still early dawn, perhaps an hour after sunrise.

²¹ In Hell there was no light of sun or stars (*H. i. 6æ, xxxiv. 139*), and so the phenomenon had not occurred till now.

²⁶ Dante follows the traditional epitaph of Virgil—

*"Mantua me genuit : Calabri rapuere ; tenet nunc
Parthenope."*

I cannot help quoting a verse from the striking hymn said to have been sung at Mantua in the fifteenth century, and, it may be, earlier, in the Festival of St. Paul. St. Paul, it was said, went to Naples to visit the tomb of Virgil—

*"Ad Maronis mausoleum
Ductus, fudit super eum,
Pie rorem lacrymæ ;
'Quem te,' inquit, 'reddidissem,
Si te vivum invenissem,
Poetarum Maxime.'"*—Daniel, *Thes. Hymn. v. 266.*

It must be added, however, that Daniel quotes it from Schlosser (*Lied. der Kirche*), who says that he could find no MS. of the hymn, and had only heard this verse of it, repeated by a brother who had lived at Mantua. On the whole, the evidence is hazy. All that we can say is that, whether Dante had heard it or not, it is in full harmony with his feeling.

To suffer freezing cold and torturing blaze
 Bodies like this doth Power Supreme ordain,
 Which wills to veil from us His work and ways.
 Insane is he who hopes our reason vain
 Can scale of path the height that knows no end. ³⁵
 Where Persons Three One Substance doth contain.

Be ye content, O men, to keep in sight
 What is, for could ye knowledge full acquire,
 Then Mary's birth-throes had been needless quite: cf. Inf 4. 127

And thou hast seen the unsatisfied desire
 Of men, whose yearnings then had found repose,
 Who vainly now eternally aspire.
 Of Aristotle, Plato, and of those
 Still many more, I speak,"—and then his head
 He bowed in silence, brooding o'er his woes. ⁴⁵

Now towards the mountain's base our footsteps
 sped,
 And there we found the precipice so steep, cf. 1. 114
 That all in vain had been the nimblest tread.
 The rocks that Lerici and Turbia keep,
 The barest and most broken, were a stair ⁵⁰
 Compared with that, which one might lightly
 leap.

³¹ The answer points, like St. Paul's in 1 *Cor.* xv., to the impotence of human reason. God can provide a body material enough to suffer, but too subtle to intercept the light.

³⁶ The mystery of mysteries prepares the soul to acquiesce in the fact (*quia* in Mediæval Latin states a fact and not a reason) without asking for the cause, final or efficient. So in Arist. *An. Post.* c. 13, and elsewhere, the *ὅτι* (= fact) is contrasted with the *διότι* (= reason why). Had man's intellect not been finite and clouded, there would have been no need of the Incarnation. Reason must be content to receive the revealed truth in the lowliness of faith. It was through the limitations of their intellect that the wisest of the heathens (in the "many others" Virgil sorrowfully includes himself) failed to attain to the knowledge of God, the absence of which kept them in the outer *limbus* of unsatisfied desires.

⁴⁹ The comparison indicates a reminiscence of Riviera travelling, which, before the Cornice Road, must have been rough and perilous enough. Lerici, in the Gulf of Spezzia, Turbia, not far from Villafranca, are named as the boundaries of Liguria. Even so steep was the first climb up the Mount of Purification.

"Who knows which side an easier slope doth bear,"
 Then said my Master, halting on his way,
 "That one who has no wings may mount up there?"
 And while, with eyes down-bending he did stay, 55
 With eager mind to scrutinise the road,
 And my gaze upward o'er the rock did stray,
 On the left hand, a band of souls there showed,
 Who, as in our direction, moved their feet,
 Yet hardly seemed to stir, so slow they trod; 60
 "Lift up thine eyes," I did my Guide entreat,
 "See one on this side who'll give counsel wise,
 If thou thyself hast no suggestion meet."
 Then he looked on me with frank open eyes,
 And said, "Let us go thither: they come slow, 65
 And thou, sweet son, to stronger hopes arise."
 Still was that people as far off, I trow,
 (I say when we had gone a mile or more)
 As far as stalwart hands a stone could throw,
 When they all gathered where the hard crags soar 70
 Of that high cliff, and stood erect and close,
 As one who, doubting, halts to look before.
 "Ye spirits, whom Divine foreknowledge chose,
 Whose end was blest," spake Virgil, "by that peace 75
 Wherein, I deem, ye all shall find repose,
 Tell us where slopes the mountain, that with ease
 We may have power to climb the upward way;
 The wisest man lost time doth most displease."
 As tender ewes from out the sheepfold stray, 80
 By ones, twos, threes, and others timid stand,
 While on the ground their eyes and noses play,

⁵² Virgil knew the pathways of Hell (*H.* ix. 30), but Purgatory was a new region to him. Human wisdom could see the consequences of sin, but was at sea as to the mode of its removal. Both the higher and the lower self look out for the guidance of those who are bound on the same journey. All that Virgil can do is to bid his scholar "hope on, hope ever."

⁶⁷ The souls that meet the pilgrims are (*l.* 136) those who, though repentant at last, have yet died excommunicated. They know the way (*C.* iv. 18), which, as yet, they may not tread.

And what the foremost doth, that doth the band,
Around her pressing, if to halt she chance,
Quiet, though why they do not understand,
So I beheld the foremost one advance 85
Out of the fold of that blest company,
With noble mien and modest shrinking glance.
And when those in the vanward did espy,
The broken rays that fell upon my right,
So that the shadow o'er the rock did lie, 90
They halted, and drew back at that same sight;
And all the others, who came close behind,
Did just the same, though why, unknowing
quite.
"I own to you, ere questions utterance find,
This is a human body which ye see, 95
And hence the shadow on the ground defined.
Nor marvel ye at this, but deem that he,
Not without strength that cometh from on
high,
Seeks o'er this rampart to find passage free."
So spake my Guide, and that good company 100
Said: "Turn ye then and now before us go,"
With beck of hands they signalled us to try;
And one of them began: "Thou who dost go
This way, whoe'er thou art, turn here thine
eyes,
And think if thou in yon world me didst know." 105
I turned to him, and looked in steadfast wise;
Fair was he, goodly, and of gentle mien,
But one brow showed a sword-stroke's injuries.
And when I humbly said I had not seen
His face before, he said, "Then now behold," 110
And showed a wound his neck and breast between.

⁸⁵ The "head" of the flock is a noun of multitude = the foremost. The souls are startled by the shadow cast by Dante's body, as he had been by the absence of Virgil's shadow (l. 21).

Then: "I am Manfred," with a smile he told,
 "Grandson of Constance, of imperial state,
 Therefore, when thou art where thou wast of old,
 Go to my daughter fair, I pray, whom fate 115
 Hath made the mother of Sicilia's pride,
 And Arragon's, and there the truth relate,
 If other tale be told—that, as I died,
 My body pierced with twofold deadly wound,
 Weeping I turned to Him whose love flows wide. 120
 Dreadful and dire the sins that wrapt me round,
 But such wide arms hath goodness infinite
 That room for each returning soul is found,

¹¹² Manfred, a natural son of the Emperor Frederick II., born in Sicily 1231. *Vill.* (vi. 46) speaks of him as inheriting both the accomplishments and the nobleness of his father. Their Papal enemies charged Manfred with being an Epicurean, like Frederick, and with indulging in the same licence, and accused him of having caused the death of his brothers, Conrad and Henry, and even of his father. He was excommunicated by Innocent IV., and was still under that sentence when he fell in 1266 at the battle of Benevento. His body, after being carried through the streets of that town on an ass, was brought before Charles of Anjou. Even the French nobles begged that it might have Christian burial, but the King refused, on the ground that he was still excommunicated, and the body was buried under a cairn of stones at the foot of the bridge at Benevento. Even this, however, did not satisfy the hatred of his Papal foes, and Clement IV. sent the Cardinal Archbishop of Cosenza to urge that the body should not be allowed to pollute a land which belonged to the Church, and so the corpse was disinterred and found a final resting-place on the banks of the Verde, identified by some writers with the Liris or Garigliano, on the confines of Apulia and the Campagna (*Vill.* vii 9; *Milm. L. C.* vi. 372; *Arrio.* 8-10). We note once more, as in the case of Francesca (*H.* v. 124-138) and Ugolino (*H.* xxxiii. 19-75) the creative insight of Dante's psychology. No historian records Manfred's penitence; no one had been present to report his last words in the heat of battle. Historians represent him as being licentious and irreligious (*Vill.* vi. 46). But what Dante had heard of his character (*V. E.* i. 12), perhaps also (l. 107) what he had heard of the expression of his face, led him to feel that, in the absence of the unbelief which placed his father in Hell (*H.* x. 119), such an one *must* have repented. A Sicilian chronicle describes him as "*Homo flavus, amana facie, aspectu placabilis, sidereis oculis*" (Murat. *Scr. Rer. It.* viii. 830).

¹¹³ Constance, daughter of Roger, king of Sicily, and wife of Henry VI., through whom the crown of that island descended to Frederick II.

¹¹⁵ The daughter is another Constance, who married Peter of Arragon and had three sons, Alphonso (*d.* 1291), Frederick, king of Sicily, and James, of Arragon, who are mentioned disparagingly in *C.* vii. 119; *Par.* xix. 130. Was Dante contemplating a visit to Arragon when he wrote?

¹²¹ Did Dante believe the darker charges brought against Manfred? Possibly yes, and therefore made Manfred a typical instance of the infinite Compassion that receives all penitents, even though under Papal excommunication. The limitation by that Compassion of Papal power to condemn

And if Cosenza's pastor had read right—

He was by Clement sent my steps to chase— 125

This scripture wisely, as by God's own light,
My bones had still found rest, were that the case,
At the bridge-head to Benevento near,

Where the vast cairn stands bulwark of the place.
Now the rain bathes them, and the storm-winds bear 130

Beyond the realm, yea, hard by Verde's stream,
By him, with lights extinguished, carried there.

Nor by their maledictions lost, I deem,

Is Love Eternal beyond power of change,

So long as Hope's young buds with verdure gleam. 135

True is it he whom hardened sins estrange

From Holy Church, though he repent at last,

Must needs upon this bank an exile range,

Full thirty-fold for all the period past

Of his presumptuous sins, unless, perchance, 140

Prayers duly offered make the time speed fast.

See, if thou canst my blessedness advance,

And to my Constance dear the plight reveal

Which thou hast seen, and what my hinderance ;

We here of prayers on earth the virtue feel." 145

is, of course, the counterpart of the limitation of its power to absolve, by the Divine Righteousness, in the case of Guido of Montefeltro (*H.* xxvii. 85-129)

¹³² The body of Manfred had been thrown out on the banks of the Verde with the ringing of bells and the extinguished, inverted torches which belonged to the ritual of excommunication (*Milm. L. C.* vi. 244).

¹³⁵ Green, as the sign of life, and therefore of hope. It is perhaps suggestive that it was Manfred's favourite colour, and that through life he always dressed in green (*Vill.* vi. 46).

¹³⁹ The authority of the Church is, however, so far recognised that the contumacy which does not seek for release from censure must be punished thirty-fold. Hence Manfred, excommunicated by Clement IV. in 1265, dying in 1266, was only just admitted to the vestibule of Purgatory.

¹⁴³ The good Constance is the daughter spoken of in l. 115.

¹⁴⁵ Throughout the *Purg.* Dante emphasises the doctrine of the Fathers and the Schoolmen as to prayers for the dead. They avail "*ad diminutionem pœnæ*," and as a *satisfaction* for sins (*Aquin. Summ.* iii. 71, 2 ; *Lomb. Sentt.* iv. 45B). *Comp. C.* iv. 134, v. 70, vi. 26, xi. 34.

*The Steep Ascent—The Penitents of the eleventh Hour—
Belacqua*

WHEN, or through sense of pleasure or of pain,
Which seizes on some faculty of ours,
The soul doth, as absorbed by it, remain,
It seems to give no heed to other powers;
And this refutes their error who surmise 5
That one soul in us o'er another towers;
And hence, when aught doth fall on ears or eyes
Which keeps the soul drawn to it mightily,
Time, all unheeded by us, onward flies;
For one power is perceptive faculty, 10
The whole soul is the other's residence,
And this is as in bonds, while that is free.
Of this I had a true experience,
So did that spirit's voice my wonder fill;
For fifty full degrees the sun rose thence, 15
And I was not aware of it until
We came to where the spirits to us cried,
All with one voice, "Lo, here ye have your will."
Oft doth the peasant churl a gap more wide
Close with a pitchfork full of briar or thorn, 20
When the grape's clusters are by autumn dyed,

⁵ The condemnation is directed against the Platonic view of three separate souls in man (*Tim.* 69; Arist. *de An.* iii.), or, perhaps, the Manichean error, condemned in the eighth General Council (Can. viii.) of two souls. Comp. R. Browning, *A Death in the Desert*. Dante follows the more accurate language of Aquinas (*Summ.* i. 76, qu. 3), that there is one soul, with the potencies or faculties of living, feeling, reasoning (comp. *Conv.* iii. 2, iv. 7). The fact which Dante describes is the concentration of the soul on one thought or sensation, so that all other consciousness is suspended. Of this, Socrates, Aquinas, and Dante himself, of whom it was said that he would stand in meditation motionless for hours together, were notable examples (*Smith's Bibl. Dict.* art. (*Trance*)).

¹⁵ The fifty degrees would imply a period of about two hours, during which Dante had taken no heed of time.

²¹ The note of time is suggestive. It is just when the grapes are ripening that the keeper of the vineyard stops up every gap. The ethical meaning of the narrow gap is the same as that of the "strait gate" and "narrow way" of *Matt.* vii. 14.

Than was the pathway where we then did turn,
 My Guide and I, as I behind him sped,
 When as that troop away from us were borne. 25
 Sanleo one may scale, down Noli tread,
 To Bismantova's topmost height aspire,
 With feet alone ; here needs one wings instead,—
 Swift wings I mean, and pinions of desire,
 Led on by him from whom my spirit drew 30
 Hope of success, and guiding light of fire.
 We mounted up, that broken rock-path through ;
 And on each side its barriers hemmed us in,
 And the ground called for feet and hand-grasp
 too ;
 And when our way we to the edge did win 35
 Of the high bank which slopes towards the plain,
 " Master," said I, " what way shall we begin ?"
 " Let not one step," said he, " descend again ;
 Still press behind me to the mountain's height,
 Till some wise Guide to lead us on shall deign." 40
 The summit was so high it baffled sight,
 And steeper far it rears its sloping side
 Than line that doth bisect an angle right.
 Then I, o'er-spent and weary, thus replied :
 " O my sweet Father, turn thou here and see 45
 How, if thou stay not, I alone abide."
 " My Son, up yonder, onward press," said he,
 His finger pointing to a ledge above,
 Which on that side the hill girds evenly.

25 More recollections of Riviera and other travelling (C. iii. 49). San Leo, not far from San Marino, is in the duchy of Urbino ; Noli, between Savona and Finale, on the Western Riviera ; Bismantova, near Reggio and Modena. Dante had obviously experiences of all three, and had found them sufficiently difficult of ascent. Here keen desire gave wings to feet and hands.

37 We read between the lines, and find that the one counsel which human wisdom can give to the soul that is wearied with its upward way is, at any rate, not to take one downward step, but to follow the guidance of the higher Reason till a yet higher guide shall come.

42 A mountain sloping at an angle of 45° presents, it must be admitted, a somewhat serious problem.

So strong to spur me on his words did prove ;
 I forced myself, and near him clambered on, 50
 So that my feet did on that cornice move.
 Then we sat down there, both of us, each one
 Turned to the East, whence we began to rise,
 For in thus looking back is full joy won ;
 To the low shores I first bent down mine eyes, 55
 Then raised them to the sun, and saw its rays
 Smite on us from the left with great surprise.
 And when the Poet saw my puzzled gaze
 As then I looked upon the sun's bright car,
 Where 'twixt us and the North it tracked its
 ways, 60
 Then he to me: "If Castor-Pollux star
 Were now attending yonder mirror clear,
 Which downward, upward spreads its light afar,
 Then wouldst thou see, far closer to the Bear,
 The reddened Zodiac on its circuit wind, 65
 Unless, perchance, from its old path it veer.
 How that may be wouldst thou be fain to find,
 Think thou within thyself how Zion stands,
 So with this mountain on the earth combined,
 That each the same horizon-line commands, 70
 With hemispheres diverse, and so the road,
 To drive on which unskilled were Phaeton's hands,

⁵¹ Acting on the counsel given, helped by the presence of his Mentor, the pilgrim reaches the first terrace of the Mountain, and there finds a resting-place.

⁵⁴ The "*meminisse juvabit*" of *Aen.* i. 203 is stated as a law of man's nature. He who has overcome his first difficulty "thanks God and takes courage." *Ce n'est que le premier pas qui coûte.*

⁵⁷⁻⁸⁰ As in *Conv.* iii. 5, Dante delights in imagining the phenomena of the Antipodes beyond the Tropic of Capricorn. There the sun, which we see in the south at noon, would be seen in the north. If the sun had been in Gemini (Castor and Pollux of l. 61), it would be seen still nearer to Ursa Major, *i.e.*, farther to the north. We seem, in all these astronomical passages, to see the poet with his globe and astrolabe before him working out his problems. The word "*rubeccchio*," in l. 64, is taken by most commentators as = ruddy, by some as = mill-wheel, and thus applied to the Zodiac. The "ancient road" is the ecliptic of our globe, representing the sun's apparent course through the signs of the Zodiac.

Thou'lt see how this must on one side be showed,
 While that upon the other side is seen,
 If that thy mind its path hath rightly trod." 75
 "Never, O Master mine," said I, "I ween,
 Saw I so clearly as I now discern,
 Where until now my spirit weak hath been,
 That the mid-circle of the Heavens that turn,
 Which is in science as Equator known, 80
 'Twixt winter placed and where the Sun doth burn,
 For reason which thou tell'st, must hence be thrown
 Northwards, as far as did the Hebrews old
 Behold it, stretching to the hotter zone.
 But if it please thee I would fain be told 85
 How far our journey; higher doth the hill
 Rise than mine eyes can raise them to behold."
 And he to me: "This Mount is such that still,
 Beginning from below, 'tis rough and steep,
 But as one climbs the less he finds it ill. 90
 Therefore when thou from it such joy shalt reap,
 As makes thy journey seem as light and smooth
 As in a boat that down-stream course doth keep,
 Then shalt thou reach thy pathway's end in sooth,
 There hope thy panting breath awhile to rest; 95
 More I speak not, but this I know is truth."
 And when he had these words on me impressed,
 A voice not far off cried: "But thou, perchance,
 Shalt have to halt ere that as one distressed."

⁸¹ In the winter of either the northern or southern hemisphere the equator lies between that hemisphere and the path of the ecliptic.

⁸³ The reading *quanto* rather than *quando* gives obviously a closer meaning. What Dante has learnt is not generally that Jerusalem (implied in the "Hebrews") and the Mountain of Purgatory are in different hemispheres, but that the one is precisely the antipodes of the other one, as far south of the equator as the other was north.

⁸⁹ The parable here is so plain that he who runs may read. The work of purification is complete when there is no inner conflict which makes it difficult.

⁹³ The warning voice checks the enthusiasm of a too eager climber, who thinks he can press upward without an interval of repose. Is it a friendly or an unfriendly warning? cynical, or simply prudent, like the "rest

And at that sound we each turned round our glance, ¹⁰⁰
 And saw upon our left a rock rise high
 Which erst nor he nor I to note did chance;
 Thither we drew, and then we saw full nigh
 A troop of souls behind the great crag's shade,
 As one who stands still, resting slothfully: ¹⁰⁵
 And one who seemed to me with toil o'erweighed,
 Was sitting down, his arms around each knee,
 And low between them was his face down laid;
 "O sweet my Lord," I said, "look here and see,
 And gaze on him who seems more negligent ¹¹⁰
 Than if Sloth's self his sister claimed to be."
 Then he turned to us, gaze upon us bent,
 Scarce lifting up his face above his thigh,
 And said: "Mount thou: thy valour is not spent;" ¹¹⁵
 Then knew I who he was; nor then did I,
 Though still that struggle made me panting tread,
 Allow myself to halt till I drew nigh.
 When I came near he hardly raised his head,
 And said: "Hast thou seen clearly how the Sun
 O'er thy left shoulder his bright car hath led?" ¹²⁰
 His sluggish mien, and words that slow did run,
 Did move my lips a little to a smile;
 Then I began: "Belacqua, now I've done

awhile" of a higher Master (*Mark* vi. 31)? The tone of ll. 119-127 suggests the former. The slothful man tries to make others like himself, and to magnify the dangers and sufferings of the upward path (*Prov.* xxvi. 13).

¹⁰⁶ The picture is that of a specially Italian form of the *far niente*. One in that attitude was, as it were, the very brother of Sloth.

¹¹⁸ The speaker had overheard the question and answer of ll. 57-80 with the self-satisfaction of the sluggard, who is content with observing the fact, without either the wonder or the question which form the starting-point of science. Such men may well have vexed the soul of Dante in his geographical or astronomical studies.

¹²³ Of Belacqua nothing is known beyond the fact that he was a Florentine, and a maker of musical instruments, probably, therefore, a friend of Casella and Dante. His time was spent chiefly at his work, his dinner, his *siesta*. Dante once reproved him for his inactivity, and was met with the answer from Aristotle, "*Sedendo et quiescendo animus officitur sapiens*" (*Scart., Weg.* 90). He might have added the *dictum* of *Eth. Nicom.* x. 7, that happiness consists in leisure (*σχολή*). The picture now drawn might

PURGATORY

CANTO V

Grieving for thee, but tell me why this while
 Dost thou sit here? Expectest guide or friend? 125
 Or does thy wonted habit thee beguile?"

And he: "What boots it, brother, to ascend,
 Since there God's angel, sitting at the gate,
 Would not permit me to my pain to wend?
 First it behoves that I outside must wait, 130
 While Heaven moves round the measure of my
 years,
 Since my good sighs, delayed long, came too late,
 Unless, ere that, some prayer a succour bears,
 Uprising from a heart that lives in grace;
 What profit others that Heaven never hears?" 135

And now the Poet mounted on apace
 And said, "Come on, thou see'st that now the
 Sun
 Is at meridian height, while Night to trace
 Her pathway o'er Morocco hath begun."

CANTO V

*The Penitents of the last Minute—Buonconte da Montefeltro
 —La Pia*

I HAD already parted from that shade,
 And in my Leader's footsteps followed on,
 When one behind, who sign with finger made,
 Shouted, "See there, it seems as if there shone 5
 No sunshine on the left of him below,
 And seems he moves as doth a living one."
 Mine eyes I turned on hearing him speak so,
 And saw them watching with astonishment,
 Me only, me, and that light's broken glow.

almost be labelled "*Sic sedebat*." It is allowable to trace an association of ideas leading on from Casella (C. ii. 91).

"Why is thy mind thus on itself intent?" 10
 Then said my Master, "that thou'rt slow to walk?
 What boots it thee what by their whisper's meant?
 Come on behind me; let the people talk;
 Be thou like tower that bendeth not its height,
 And doth the fierce winds of their victory baulk. 15
 For aye the man in whom thoughts weak and light
 Spring, each on other, from the goal doth roam,
 For one still weakens all the other's might."
 What could I answer more than just "I come"?
 So spake I, somewhat touched with that same hue, 20
 Which worthy of forgiveness rendereth some.
 Meantime along the slope there came in view
 A tribe that moved in front a little space,
 And verse by verse sang *Miserere* through.
 And when they noticed that I gave no place 25
 Through this my body for the light to go,
 Their song to one long, hoarse "Oh!" changed
 apace.

13 The words find an echo in the inscription at Marischal College, Aberdeen—THEI SAIE: QUHAT SAIE THEI? LETTE THEM SAIE, which, in its turn, is but a translation from the Greek. In *V. N.* c. 14 we have the other side of the poet's character.

18 As elsewhere, Dante's self-scrutiny leads to the discovery of the two elements of the poet's nature: (1) an almost morbid sensitiveness to the criticism of others on what seems to them strange or startling in his acts or words; (2) the scorn of that criticism to which his higher nature, impersonated in Virgil, leads him. The humility of which the rush-girdle was the symbol (*C. i.* 94) was with him, as with St. Paul, compatible with a profound ultimate indifference to man's judgment (*1 Cor. iv.* 3). One can almost fancy that the lines were written after he had seen men pointing at him in the streets of Verona, and heard them whispering, "There goes the man who has been in Hell." The simile of the tower is as an echo from *Æn. x.* 692-694. Line 16 expresses the result of an induction wider than the self-scrutiny. The man who cannot hold out against what people say, against the vexing thoughts to which their words give rise, loses all energy and consistency of character. One notes the conscious blush with which Virgil's reproof is accepted, the discernment also which recognises that such a blush does not always make a man worthy of the pardon of his fault, but that this depends on the nature of the fault and the character of the offender.

24 The *Miserere* is Ps. li. Dante had felt, as thousands before and after him have felt, that that Psalm struck the keynote of all true penitence and purification.

And two of them as envoys then did show,
 And ran to meet us, as of us to learn :
 "Let us, we pray, your state and business know." 30
 Then said my Master : "Ye may now return,
 And take back word to those who sent you here,
 That in this man true flesh they may discern.
 If they stood still to see his shadow there,
 As I suppose, enough has now been said ; 35
 Show honour, and more kind will he appear."
 Ne'er in my sight have fiery vapours sped
 In early eve to cleave the blue serene,
 Or clouds of August in the sunset red, 40
 More quick than they anon to turn were seen;
 And turning so, when they the others met,
 They wheeled on us, like squadron without rein.
 "The folk that press us form a throng close set,"
 The poet said, "and they imploring come;
 So still go onward, onward, listening yet." 45
 "O soul that tak'st thy way to blessed home,
 With limbs the same as those thy mother bore,"
 Shouting they came, "stay here, and look if some
 Among us thou hast ever seen before,
 That news of him to yon world thou mayst bear; 50
 Ah! why dost go? Why haltest thou no more?
 We all a death of violence did share,
 And sinners were, e'en to our latest hour;
 Then light from Heaven made our vision clear;

36 In Hell the poet's work, on his return to earth, was limited to reviving the fame (*H.* xv. 119), or, at farthest, vindicating the character (*H.* xiii. 53, xxxii. 138) of the souls with whom he came in contact. Here he can do more by asking their friends on earth to pray for their growth in holiness, and therefore for their peace.

37 Partly an echo of *Virg. Georg.* i. 365-367, but embodying also (1) the mediæval theory of the origin of shooting stars (*Tres.* ii. 33), and (2) the well-known fact that August is the month in which they most frequently appear. *Milt. P. L.* iv. 536 may be compared, as describing the same phenomena. "Clouds of August" are in the objective case.

52 The leaning of the poet to the larger hope (*Par.* xix. 70-114, xx. 94-135) appears in the prominence given to the power of penitence, even *in articulo mortis*, with no priestly absolution, no recorded confession, under

So by repentance and love's pardoning power 55
 We passed from life as reconciled to God,
 On whom to gaze strong yearnings us devour."
 And I, "Though every face to me is showed,
 Yet recognise I none; but if aught please
 That I can do, O spirits born for good, 60
 Tell me, and I will do it, by that peace,
 Which makes me, following such a Guide as this,
 Seek it from world to world and never cease."
 And one began; "Each one full certain is
 Of thy good will, though oaths of thine were none, 65
 Unless thy will through want of power shall miss,
 Whence I, who speak before the rest alone,
 Pray thee, if ever thou that land dost see
 'Twixt Charles's kingdom and Romagna thrown,
 That thou wouldst ask of thy great courtesy 70
 That Fano's prayers may be on me bestowed,
 That I may purge my grave iniquity.
 Thence sprang I, but the deep wounds, whence there
 flowed
 The blood wherein of old I dwelt secure,
 Were given in land by Antenori trod, 75

least favourable conditions, to win the pardoning grace of God. He would have taught, as Latimer and Pusey did, that there was time for that repentance between the uplifting of the headsman's axe and the fatal stroke.

⁵⁶ Comp. J. H. Newman, *Dream of Gerontius*: "Thou wilt be sick with love, and yearn for Him. . . ." (p. 355, ed. 1883).

⁶⁷ The first speaker is Jacopo del Cassero of Fano, in the March of Ancona, between Romagna and the kingdom of Naples, then (in 1300) under Charles of Anjou. His family were of honourable fame from the tenth century onward. Jacopo himself was an ally of the Florentine Guelphs against Arezzo in 1283, was Podestà of Bologna in 1296, and in 1298 was invited by Maffeo Visconti to act as Podestà of Milan. On his way thither he was assassinated near Padua by the emissaries of Azzo VIII., Marquis of Este, Malatesta of Rimini being suspected of some share in the murder. His tomb, with a long Latin inscription, is in the Church of S. Domenico in Fano. It describes him as the "*decus et salus patriæ*," and ends with invoking the prayers of the Virgin for his soul. "*Theotocos igitur ut regnet minime desit*." That last line may have suggested Dante's treatment of the facts. Jacopo was said to have provoked Azzo by having spoken of him as a traitor and a coward.

⁷⁵ The local tradition that Padua was founded by Antenor (his grave is still shown and there is a *Café al Antenor*, *Amp.* 331) is a sufficient explana-

There where I dreamed my safety was most sure:
 'Twas he of Este had it done, whose spite
 Went far beyond what justice could endure.
 But had I towards Mira taken flight,
 When I o'erta'en at Oriaco stood, 80
 I still had breathed in yonder world of light.
 I to the marshes ran, where reeds and mud
 So tangled me that I fell there, and saw
 Upon the ground a pool of mine own blood."
 Then said another, "That which thee doth draw 85
 Be thine, the wish to mount this lofty hill,
 So thou help mine by love's all-pitying law!
 Of Montefeltro once, Buonconte still:
 Nor others, nor Giovanna, for me care.
 Hence as I walk sad looks tell tale of ill." 90

tion of the term. Remembering, however, Dante's associations with the name Antenor (*H.* xxxii. 88), its use here was probably intended to be suggestive of the complicity of the Paduans in Azzo's guilt.

⁷⁹ Mira and Oriaco both lie in the country between Padua and Venice. Jacopo fled to the latter, found himself entangled in the marshy swamps, and bled to death.

⁸⁸ The Buonconte who speaks was the son of the Guido da Montefeltro whose tale is told in *H.* xxvii. 67-136. He commanded the forces of the Aretines in the battle of Campaldino (1289), in which Dante, Vieri dei Cerchi, Corso Donati, Guido Cavalcanti, and the brother of Francesca of Rimini had taken part (*Vill.* vii. 13). All that was known of his fate was that his body was never found. Out of that single fact, and the indifference shown to his memory by his widow (l. 89), Dante constructs the tale of infinite sadness that follows, all the more notable because its hero had fought on the opposite side to his. Here the soul knows that as yet no prayers are offered for him on earth, not even by his Giovanna. He begins by narrating his flight from the battlefield to the Casentino (*H.* xxx. 65), or upper valley of the Arno. The Archiano is a torrent stream that flows from the Apennines above the monastery (strictly hermitage) of Camaldoli, founded by S. Romuald of Ravenna in 1012 (*Par.* xxii. 49). Buonconte reached the stream where it flows into the Arno, sank exhausted, his last utterance being a cry to her on whom he looked as Our Lady, Mother of Compassion. The scene that follows reminds us, in part, of the tale of Montefeltro's father in *H.* xxvii. 112, in part, also, of the tradition as to the body of Moses in *Jude* v. 9. Here the demon, defrauded of the soul, wreaks his vengeance on the body. As in legends without end (the belief surviving in the modera "typhoon"), the storm that follows, though natural forces are employed, is traced to the demon's power as its cause. Pratomagno was on the left bank of the Arno, not far from Arezzo. The streams were swollen with the rain; the Archiano, into which the wounded man fell, bore him into the Arno. He sought, in the double agony of soul and body, to express his faith in the Crucified One by placing his arms cross-wise on his breast.

And I to him : " What force or chance did bear
Thee so far off from Campaldino's plain,
That thou wast buried, no man knowing where ? "

" At Casentino's foot," said he again,
" There flows a stream as Archiano known, 95
Which from the Apennine convent seeks the
main.

There, where it drops the name it once did own,
I came, my throat with many a wound pierced
through,

On foot, and all the plain was blood-bestrown. 100
There my sight failed, and with it utterance too
Ceased with the name of Mary ; and I fell,
And my corpse lifeless lay exposed to view.

Truth will I speak ; do thou the living tell ;
God's angel took me, and Hell's loudly cried,
' Why robb'st thou me, thou, who in Heaven dost 105
dwell ?

Thou bear'st the part that ever shall abide,
For one poor tear that cheats me of my prize ;
The rest shall by another doom be tried.'

Thou knowest well how in the air doth rise 110
That humid vapour which in raindrops breaks,
Soon as it mounts where cold pervades the skies.

Then came that Evil Will who evil seeks,
That only, with his mind, and with the power
His nature gives him, moves the windy reeks ; 115
And so the valley, at day's closing hour,

From Pratomagno to the mountain-chain,
He veiled with cloud, and made the heaven to lower,
So that the pregnant air condensed to rain.

The showers fell fast, and to the gullies came 120
So much of them as earth could not contain ;

And, as with torrents strong they one became,
Towards the kingly river on they passed
So quickly that no force their strength could tame.

My frozen body near its mouth at last
 The raging Archian found and drove amain 125
 I' the Arno, and set loose the cross which fast
 I o'er my breast made, when I bowed to pain:
 It rolled me on its banks and in its bed;
 Then girt and hid me with its stolen gain."
 "Ah! when thou back unto the world shalt tread 130
 And hast found rest from thy long pilgrimage,"
 So a third spirit, in due order, said,
 "Let me, La Pia, then thy thoughts engage:
 Siena gave me life, Maremma slew.
 He knows it, who, with ring of marriage, 135
 Made me, espoused before, wear jewel new."

*The Crowd of the waiting Ones—Their Prayer for Prayers
 —Sordello of Mantua—Lamentations over Italy*

WHEN game of *Zara* cometh to an end,
 The loser stays behind in sorrowing mood:
 Goes o'er his throws again, and fain would mend;

¹³³ The Pia was a lady of Sienna, of the house of the Guastelloni. Her first husband was Baldo dei Tolomei, by whom she had two sons. She was left a widow in 1290, and documents are extant in which she gives an account of the property she held for them. Her second husband, Paganello, had a castle in the Maremma, to which he took her, and where she disappeared, no one knowing how. The early commentators conjecture that she was thrown from a window of the castle into a deep gorge below. Later guesses suggest that the husband coolly watched her decay as she sank under the local miasma (*H.* xxix. 48)—(*Scart.*). Lately, however (*Acad.* June 19, 1886), a Siennese scholar, Banchi, has announced that his researches have brought to light a very different story, the Pia dei Tolomei having died in 1318. For this, however, we have to wait.

¹³⁶ I adopt the reading "*disposata*," referring the *inanellata* to the first marriage. One notes here also the bitterness of the feeling that there are none praying for her soul on earth—that he to whom she speaks is the only one from whom she can look for prayers.

¹ The game of *zara* (= zero, the term being applied to certain unlucky throws) was played with three dice. The rules of its game we may well pass over. What we note is the vivid picture of Italian mediæval life which the lines bring before us. The game is played in public; the loser goes

Off with the other moveth all the crowd,
 One walks before, one closely clings behind, 5
 And, at his side, of notice one is proud.
 He pauses not, this friend or that doth mind,
 And he who gets his hand no more doth press;
 Thus through the throng his safe way he doth wind.
 So was I in the midst of that crowd's stress, 10
 Turning to them, now here, now there, my face,
 And from them freed myself by promises.
 One I saw there, an Aretine in race,
 Whom the fierce arm of Ghin di Tacco slew,
 And one who perished drowning, in the chase. 15
 Near me, with outstretched hands entreating, drew
 Frederic Novello, and the Pisan youth
 Who made Marzucco show his greatness true.

over the game again in his thoughts that he may profit by his blunders; the bystanders crowd round the winner, hoping for a share in his winnings. So, Dante says, was he. The souls of those who had been cut off in the blossom of their sins found in him so ready a sympathy that they crowded round him, each seeking to tell his own sad tale of woe, each asking for the alms of prayer.

¹³ The Aretine was Benincasa da Laterina, who had studied civil law with Accorsio (*H.* xv. 110) at Bologna, and was made judge at Arezzo. In that character he condemned to death two relations of Ghino di Tacco, who led a robber-life in the Maremma, and Ghino, in revenge, stabbed him as he was sitting on his judgment-seat in Rome. Ghino himself had taken possession of the Pope's castle at Radicofani, and led the same kind of life there, not without occasional touches of Robin Hood-like humour or pity towards his victims, of which anecdotes are told not essential to our understanding Dante. He was of Siennese origin, and belonged to the noble family of the Pecorei da Turrita. According to one account, he was afterwards reconciled to Boniface VIII., made a Knight of St. John, and given the post of Prior in one of their hospitals. The last fact may, in part, account for the prominence which Dante gives to his crime (*Benw.*).

¹⁵ The other Aretine is identified with a Lucio or Ciaccio, who is said to have been drowned in the Arno as he fled from the field of battle; Bibbiena, Montaperti, or Campaldino being conjecturally named as the scene of action.

¹⁷ Frederick Novello was, as the name indicates, the son of one of the Casentino counts of that name (his father was a Ghibelline and Imperial Vicar in Tuscany), said to have died in battle in 1289, but nothing more is known of him. Dante, who knew the family well, may have named him by way of comfort to those who mourned his loss. He had seen in him the germs of a possible repentance. As to "him of Pisa," we have little beyond conjectures built upon the text. The nearest approach to a coherent story is that Giovanni, son of Marzucco Scornigiani of Pisa, was put to death by Ugolino; that the father then, calmly and without reproaches, represented to the tyrant that it would be to his honour to allow the body to be buried, and that Ugolino

I saw Count Orso ; him too who, in sooth,
 Through envy and fierce hatred, lost his life, 20
 And not for guilty deed ; so spake he truth ;
 Pierre de la Brosse I mean : and let the wife
 Of Brabant, let her now on earth take heed
 Lest she should join a herd with worse ills rife.
 As soon as I from all those souls was freed, 25
 Who only prayed that others for them pray,
 That they might holier grow with greater speed,
 Then I began : " It seems that thou dost say,
 O my true Light, in text express and plain,
 That to no prayer doth Heaven's decree give way ; 30

yielded to his importunity. The father afterwards (1286) entered the Franciscan Order (or perhaps the *Frati Gaudenti*—*Phil.*), and a sonnet addressed to him by Guittone of Arezzo is still extant. The two last facts may probably have interested Dante in the history.

¹⁹ Of Count Orso we know even less than of Marzucco. The only conjecture worth noticing, as presenting a point of contact with another part of the *Comm.*, is that which reports him to have belonged to the Ghibelline family of the Alberti, and to have been murdered by his cousin the Count Alberto or Mangona (*H.* xxxii. 57).

²² In Pierre de la Brosse of Paris we come within the range of a better known history. He was a surgeon in the Court of Philip the Bold of France, and on the death of Louis, the King's eldest son by his first wife, accused his second wife, Mary, daughter of the Duke of Brabant, of having poisoned him. The charge was dismissed, and, according to one story, the Queen revenged herself by charging him with a treasonable correspondence with Alphonso X. of Castile, with whom Philip was at war, or (the accounts differ) with an attempt on her own honour. The King believed the charge and Pierre was put to death. The Lady of Brabant did not die till 1321 (the year of Dante's own death), and may therefore have heard of the prominence thus given to her name. Dante had probably been interested in the story during his stay at Paris (*Par.* x. 136), and may have seen in it, as in the fate of Peter de Vineâ, an example of the malignant power of envy. Some commentators less accurately represent Pierre de la Brosse as having been put to death by Philip the Fair, son of the Bold.

²⁸ The eagerness of the souls in Purgatory for the prayers of their friends on earth reminds Dante of the Sibyl's answer to Palinurus when he sought to pass Acheron before the appointed time (*Æn.* vi. 376)—

" *Desine fata Deûm flecti sperare precando.*"

Virgil's answer, given from the standpoint of the wider knowledge which death had opened to him, is on the basis of Augustine's rule, "*Distingue tempora et concordabunt Scriptura.*" The prayers of Palinurus and of Æneas were without the grace of God. When a Christian prays fervently for the soul of one whom he has loved, that fervent charity is accepted by the Divine Justice as a satisfaction, and so the prayer can be granted without any abatement of the strict law of retribution. In the teaching of the Schoolmen it did not matter whether the satisfaction was given by the sinner

And yet this tribe is eager prayers to gain :
 Shall then their hope be proved a thing of nought ?
 Or do thy words thought unrevealed contain ? ”
 And he to me : “ My text is clearly taught ;
 And yet that hope of theirs leads not astray, 35
 If to discernment reason sound be brought.
 For height of justice doth not fall away,
 Because love’s fire doth in an hour complete
 The debt which he who dwells here needs must pay.
 And there, where I of this same point did treat, 40
 Default was not amended aught by prayer,
 Because the prayer no grace from God did meet :
 But in a question rousing such deep care,
 Decide not till She tells it all to thee,
 Who light ’twixt truth and intellect shall bear. 45
 I know not if thou understandest me ;
 I speak of Beatrice ; her, o’ the height
 Above, all blest and smiling, thou shalt see.”
 And I : “ Good Leader, speed we on our flight,
 For I am now not tired as heretofore ; 50
 And see, the hills cast shadows in our sight.”
 “ We,” answered he, “ with this day shall explore
 As far as we are able, but this learn,
 The fact is other than thy thoughts brood o’er.
 Ere thou the height shalt gain, thou’lt see him turn, 55
 Who now behind the hill from sight is flown,
 That we no more his broken rays discern.

himself or by others on his behalf (Aquino. *Summ.* iii. ; *Suppl.* 13, 2, 83, 1-6). Virgil, the representative of human wisdom, speaks, however, as with a conscious diffidence. The true solution of all such questions must come from Beatrice, as a representative of Theology, the *scientia scientiarum*, Divine Wisdom in its highest aspects.

49 The poet’s steps are quickened, it would seem, by the very syllables of Beatrice’s name. Why should they not press on at once? Beneath that symbol there lies the wish to represent a fact which Dante may have himself experienced—the haste of the soul, its impatience of delay in the work of purification. It has to be taught by human wisdom that the work is slower and more difficult than it imagines. Returning to the outward story, we note the fact that the ascent of the Mountain begins on Easter Monday and is not completed till the Thursday following. See note on C. ii. 1.

But see thou there a soul that all alone,
 With fixèd gaze, towards us turns his eye ;
 He will to us the quickest way make known." 60

⁶⁸ The lofty Lombard soul who stands, lion-like, all alone, like Saladin (*H.* iv. 129), is, as l. 74 shows, Sordello of Mantua. Dante's profound reverence for him has immortalised his name. Browning has sought to make "Sordello's story," as told by himself, familiar to the English reader. As it is, however, that story is still shrouded in doubtful guesses and traditions, and I follow Fauriel (i. 504) and Scart., with some reserve, in summing up a net result. Born *circa* 1200-1210 at Goito, endowed, as Browning paints him, with the gifts of beauty and genius, Sordello's youth was passed under the care of the Patriarch of Aquileia; he was received as a poet (?) at the court of Richard, Count of San Bonifazio, and assisted his wife, Cunizza, daughter of Ezzelin da Romano (*H.* xii. 110; *Par.* ix. 29-64), to escape to her father's court. The fascination which she exercised over him led to a criminal intrigue, which was detected by Ezzelin and ended in Sordello's banishment. He wandered through Italy from court to court, till in 1245 he arrived in Provence, and was honourably received by the Countess Beatrice, daughter of Raymond Berenger III., the last Count of Provence, and wife of Charles of Anjou, the brother of St. Louis, the murderer of Conradin. After the manner of Provençal troubadours, Sordello chose Beatrice as the ideal object of his love, and had some position as a knight in her father's household. From 1248-51 Charles was absent in Egypt accompanying his brother in his crusade, and during that time Sordello appears to have paid visits to the courts of Castile and Arragon. For some years after this we lose all trace of him, but for a moment, in 1266, we have at least one authentic fact. Charles was entering on his expedition against Manfred, and a letter is extant addressed to him by Clement IV. in 1266. The Pope reproves him for his want of kindness and liberality in his treatment of the Provençals, whom he had persuaded to join in the expedition, and, among other instances, names Sordello. "He, your own knight, is languishing in Novara; Sordello, who ought to be rewarded for his own sake, and yet more for his services." A short poem of Sordello's, complaining of the double pressure of poverty and illness, and an answer from Charles of Anjou, "Sordello speaks evil of me, and he ought not so to speak, for I have always loved and honoured him, . . . I have given him a wife as he desired; but he is unjust, exacting, strange, and if one gave him a country" (title and property) "he would not be grateful," probably belong to this period. Beyond this all is hazy; whether he followed Charles to Naples or returned to Provence, or now that Ezzelin and the Count of San Bonifazio were dead, found that he could live safely in or near Mantua, is simply guess-work. The place which Dante assigns to him implies that he had died a violent death (date unknown), not without repentance, but without time for the "satisfaction" of a completed penitence. These scanty records fail to show what it was that led Dante to make so much of Sordello's memory, and to place him almost on the same level with his beloved Statius. We, at all events, cannot measure the poet's judgment by our ignorance. Sordello, as being both an Italian and a Provençal poet, may have played an important part in his mental growth. Words of his may have struck root and grown and borne fruit in Dante's spirit. A trace of this influence appears in the *V. E.* i. 15, in which the Florentine speaks of Sordello as "a man of great eloquence, not only in poetry, but in every form of utterance." Even the accidents of his life, that he was a fellow citizen of Virgil's, and that he loved an ideal Beatrice, may not have been without some influence. But, beyond all this, he may have known more of the man than we do, may have seen, as Browning has taught

We came to him. O soul from Lombardy!

How stood'st thou there in thy disdainful pride,
With glances slowly turned and nobly shy!

He spake to us no word, but turned aside,

And let us go, with look upon us bent,
Like lion, when he couching doth abide.

Still near to him Virgilius drew, intent

To beg that he would point the speediest way,
And he to that request no answer sent.

But of our country and our life did pray

Fully to know. And my sweet Guide began:

"In Mantua;" then from where he erst did stay,

65

70

us to see, how the life had failed to fulfil its early promise, "the poet thwarting hopelessly the man;" may have conceived for himself what "the complete Sordello, man and bard," might have become under happier conditions, and have resolved that it should be his work to exhibit that ideal to after ages in the new Sordello of the Mount of Purification, and so to repay whatever debt of gratitude he owed to the earlier poet. It remains only to note: (1) that an untrustworthy tradition represents Ezzelin as giving his sister Beatrice in marriage to Sordello, and (2) that one historian (Emeric David, *Hist. Litt. de la France*, xxi. 450) identifies Dante's Sordello, not with the Provençal poet, but with a Podestà and Captain-General of Mantua of that name, who governed with all justice and equity, and who died in 1280; while (3) another (Millot, *Hist. Litt. des Troubadours*, ii. 80) cuts the knot by assuming the identity of the poet and the Podestà. We must be content to leave Sordello's story told as I have endeavoured to tell it. (See Tiraboschi, *Storia della Lett. Ital.* iv. 360; Fauriel, i. 504 *et seq.*; *Scart.*) It may, however, be worth while, as accounting for the reverence with which Dante obviously looks on Sordello, to note further that there may have been some points of contact through which some authentic traditions of the Mantuan may have come to the Florentine poet, such as, *e.g.*, the friendship of the latter with Charles Martel, grandson of the Beatrice of Provence, to whom Sordello gave the homage of a courtier-poet, and the fact that Cunizza, who had been Sordello's mistress, ended her days at Florence, probably in the house of Cavalcante dei Cavalcanti (*H.* x. 53), the father of Dante's friend, Guido. Comp. notes on *Par.* ix. 32. Browning, I need scarcely say, gives a very different history, but unfortunately without references or *pièces justificatives*. For further information see "Sordello," by Count G. B. d'Arco, Cremona, 1783, who speaks of him as the poet who raised the erotic tone of Provençal poetry to that of a noble and reverential love (p. 36), states that he wrote a *Tesoro de' Tesori*, treating of ethics and politics (p. 53), translated Cæsar and Quintus Curtius, and was thus a fit guide for Dante's pilgrimage to the valley of the kings. Raynouard (*Hist. des Troub.* ii. p. lvii.) quotes a poem by Sordello on the death of the Chevalier Blacas, which includes a sharp rebuke of the vices of princes, like that which Dante puts into his lips in this Canto. See also Diez, *Troub.* 465-481. Dates of birth and death are uncertain, but his appearance in Provence may be fixed as *circ.* 1227-29, and death at *circ.* 1280.

All self-absorbed, full quick to him he ran,
 Saying, as each the other clasped, "See here
 Sordello, of thy land, O Mantuan." 75
 Ah, base Italia, home of grief and fear,
 Ship without pilot, where the storm blows shrill,
 No queen of kingdoms, but a harlots' lair!
 That noble soul showed this quick eager will,
 At the sweet name of his dear fatherland, 80
 His countryman with gladsome joy to fill;
 And now in thee the living never stand
 From conflict free, and one the other tears,¹
 Of those within one wall's, one rampart's, band.
 Search round thy coasts, O thou of many cares, 85
 Washed by the sea; then look within thy breast,
 If any part in peaceful gladness shares.
 What boots it that Justinian did his best
 The rein to mend, if saddle empty be?
 Without it thou would'st be less shame-opprest. 90
 Ah, race that should'st be given to piety,
 And let the Cæsar in his saddle sit,
 If well thou hearest what God teacheth thee;
 Look how this beast grows wild in frenzy's fit,
 Seeing no spurs are there its course to guide, 95
 Since erst the curb did feel thy hand on it.

⁷⁶ It is noteworthy in any case, that the introduction of Sordello coincides with Dante's first direct burst of prophetic utterance on the state of Italy. He sees in the freedom in which the Guelphs exulted as the result of their triumph over the Empire (the passage may have been written after Henry VII.'s accession), what was really the basest bondage. In language that echoes that of the Old Testament prophets, the "lady of kingdoms" (*Isai.* xlvii. 5) has become a harlot, has sold herself to the Papacy and to France, forsaking her true lord, the Emperor. The bond of citizenship which drew Sordello to Virgil has given way to ceaseless wars and factions within the same walls. In "the ship without a pilot" we have a *replica* from *Mon.* i. 16; *Conv.* iv. 4.

⁸⁵ The shores are those of the Adriatic and Tyrrhenian seas, including the whole extent of Italy.

⁸⁸ Justinian appears, as in *Par.* vi. 19, as the ideal lawgiver and emperor. Law was to have been the bridle that curbed the passions of the people, but the saddle was empty, the imperial throne, when the Emperor was not in Italy, was as good as vacant.

⁹⁴ The words may be taken as addressed either (1) to the Papal Curia in

O Teuton Albert, who dost turn aside
 From her that fierce and wild her way doth wend,
 And oughtest on her saddle-bow to ride;
 May a just judgment from the stars descend 100
 Upon thy blood, and be it clear and new,
 That thy successor fear as dread an end!
 Since thou hast suffered, and thy father too,
 Distracted by the greed of distant lands,
 The Empire's garden to lie waste to view. 105
 See the Montecchi, Cappelletti stand,
 Monaldi, Filippeschi, reckless one,
 Those sad already, these suspicion-banned;
 Come, cruel one, yea, come, to thee be shown
 Thy people's woes, and heal the wounds that ail, 110
 And see how safe Santafiore's grown!

its usurped dominion, as having rashly undertaken the task of civil government (in continuation of the previous triplet), or (2) as part of the address to Albert. (1) seems preferable.

⁹⁷ Albert, son of Rodolph of Hapsburg, was elected Emperor in 1298, and murdered by his cousin, John of Suabia, in 1308. We thus get a probable date—*circ.* 1308-9—for the prophetic utterance (prophetic after the event) now before us. Albert is addressed in the present tense, and rebuked for not visiting Italy, from the assumed date of the poem; but ll. 101, 102, clearly point to the manner of his death, and are intended as a hint either to Henry VII. or his successor. The English reader will remember that the death of Albert synchronised with the confederation of the Swiss cantons, popularly associated with the name of William Tell (1307). *Comp. Life*, c. vii.

¹⁰⁵ Rodolph also had failed, from Dante's standpoint, to discharge the duties of an Emperor towards Italy (C. vii. 94). The Canto was probably written after Henry VII.'s election.

¹⁰⁶ Some commentators have connected one or both of the names with Cremona, but there seems no reason to question their identity with the Montagus and Capulets of Shakespeare. Both the families were Ghibellines, but had drifted into mutual hostility through the absence of the Emperor's guiding hand. The story of Romeo and Juliet is fixed by local tradition in 1313, when Can Grande was Lord of Verona. Dante may have known them (*Knight's Shakesp.* i. 8). Did Juliet remind him of Beatrice?

¹⁰⁷ Of the two families, Monaldi or Monaldeschi, are mentioned in *Vill.* vii. 15 as being at Orvieto when it was visited by Henry VII. The Filippeschi were Ghibellines, and expelled their rivals, who were Guelphs. The Verona factions had apparently borne their evil fruit more rapidly than those of Orvieto.

¹¹¹ The Counts of Santafiore had their castle in the Maremma. In 1299 and 1300 they were attacked and their land ravaged by the Siennese. The tone of the line is obviously intensely ironical, as also is that of l. 115. *Comp. C.* xi. 58.

Yea, come and see thy Rome that still doth wail,
 Widowed, alone, and day and night laments;
 "My Cæsar, why dost thou to help me fail?"
 Yea, come, and see how love her tribes cements; 115
 And if no pity for us thine heart move,
 Let fear of shame stir up thy soul's intents!
 And—if the name be lawful—our great Jove,
 Who, on the earth for us wast crucified,
 Have Thy just eyes withdrawn their light
 above? 120
 Or dost Thou, in Thy wisdom's depth, provide,
 And pave the way for some great good unseen,
 Which Thou from our perception still dost
 hide?
 For all Italia's regions filled have been
 With tyrants, and each churl, on faction bent, 125
 Comes as a new Marcellus on the scene!

¹¹³ As before, the words addressed to Albert are meant for his successor. The flight of the Pope and the Curia to the Babylonian exile of Avignon had left Rome more desolate than ever. She was, in very deed, a widowed city waiting for the arrival of her true lord, the Emperor (*Lam.* i. 1).

¹¹⁸ The transfer of the Divine Name from classical Latin to the language of Christian thought was clearly not felt to be irreverent, scarcely perhaps even startling, either by Dante or Petrarch, who uses "Jove" in like manner. So Milton (*Ode on Nat.*) speaks of Christ as "the mighty Pan," and Young's *Night Thoughts* give "O thou great Jove unfeigned" (*N. and Q.* 3rd Ser. x. 197). Our pronunciation of Jehovah as a Divine Name, to which some have looked as explaining the transfer, was unknown in the Middle Ages, and is said to have been first used by Galatino, confessor to Leo X. (*De Arc. Cath. Verit.* ii. 10, in *Scart.*). On the other hand, Dante's Hebrew studies, elementary as they were, may have led to his being acquainted with it (Witte, *D. F.* i. 43; Paur, in *D. Gesell.* iii. 423-462). The prayer coupled with the name is in the very language and tone of the Old Testament (*Isai.* i. 15; *Deut.* xxxi. 17, xxxii. 20). All seems dark, but the poet-prophet (not without another side-glance at Henry of Luxemburg) will yet believe that all is working for good.

¹²⁵ The Marcellus has been identified (1) with the conqueror of Syracuse, (2) with the Consul C. Marcellus, who joined Pompeius against Cæsar, and is therefore compared with the Guelph demagogues who resisted the Empire. It seems, however, more probable that Dante has in his mind the son of the last-named Marcellus and of Octavia, the sister of Augustus, who died young, and whose name has been immortalised as one who might have been the ideal saviour of his country (*Æn.* vi. 884). The quotation of the rest of the line, "*Manibus date lilia plenis*," in C. xxx. 21, shows that the poet's memory was haunted by the whole passage. This assumes, of course, that the name is used with the same keen irony as runs through the lines that follow.

Thou, O my Florence, mayst be well content
 With this digression, which is nought to thee,
 Thanks to thy people, wise in argument.
 Many with justice in their hearts we see 130
 Linger, lest unadvised they draw the bow;
 Thy people hath it on the tongue's tip free.
 Many to bear the common charge are slow;
 But thy good anxious people, though none call,
 Are heard to cry, "The yoke I'll undergo." 135
 Rejoice thee now, thou hast the wherewithal;
 Rich art thou, thine is peace, and thou art wise !
 If true my words, facts will not hide at all.
 Athens and Lacedæmon, whence did rise
 The laws of old, on civil order bent, 140
 Took but short step to where life's true good
 lies,
 Compared with thee, so subtly provident
 Of wise reforms, that, half November gone,
 Nought lingers that was for October meant.
 How often, in the times to memory known, 145
 Hast thou changed laws, coins, polity and right,
 And altered all thy members one by one !

¹²⁷ The irony becomes yet keener. From Dante's standpoint, as in his *Epistle to Henry VII.*, Florence was conspicuous above all cities for its political vices. There was the fox's den, there the tainted sheep that infected the whole flock. Others with good intent might work slowly. Florence was always, at any moment, quick to talk of justice. Others might shrink from the burden of office. Every citizen of Florence was eager for that burden. What most offended the conservative legal mind of Dante were the constant changes of government. All this presented a painful contrast to his ideal of the unity and permanence of law under a righteous emperor. In l. 143 there is perhaps a special allusion to the deposition in November 1302 (?), by Charles of Valois, of the Priori who had been appointed on October 15, and ought to have remained in office till the middle of December (*Vill.* viii. 49).

¹⁴⁶ Scart. enumerates no less than twenty political changes between 1243 and 1307, including alternating expulsions of Ghibellines and Guelphs (*H.* x. 46-81), the formation of the Guilds of Arts with political privileges, the Council of the fourteen Buonomini, of the Priori of the Guilds, the Gonfaloniere and Ordinances of Justice, introduced by Gian della Bella, the expulsion of that leader, and the like (*Vill.* vi.-viii.). What was all this but as the restless tossing to and fro of a woman in a fever? For the changes of coin, see *Vill.* ix. 74, xii. 97.

And if thou well reflect, and see the light,
 Thou shalt behold thyself as woman sick,
 Who on her pillow finds no rest at night, 150
 And seeks to ease her pain by turning quick.

CANTO VII

*Sordello's Guidance—The Valley of fair Colours and sweet
 Odours—The Rulers, Rodolph and others—Henry III. of
 England*

AFTER those greetings good, given joyfully,
 Had thrice, yea, four times, further been renewed,
 Sordello drew back, and said, "Who are ye?"
 "Ere yet this mountain's height the souls had viewed,
 That were deemed worthy sight of God to win, 5
 My bones found burial from Octavian good:
 Virgil am I, and for no other sin
 Than that I lacked true faith did I lose Heaven."
 So did my Guide his answer then begin.
 As one to whom some strange new sight is given, 10
 At which he looks in blank astonishment,
 "Twixt faith and doubt, "it is," "it is not,"
 driven,
 So did he seem, and then his brow he bent,
 And turned to him with humble reverence
 And clasped him as on homage due intent. 15

¹ The narrative, which had been interrupted by the long diatribe against Florence, takes up the thread of C. vi. 75.

⁶ Octavian is, of course, the Emperor Augustus (*H.* i. 71).

⁸ The absence of faith, even more than that of baptism, excluded the righteous heathen from the full salvation revealed in Christ. So P. Lombard (*Sent.* iii. 25) and Aquinas (*Summ.* ii. qu. 76, 1), and Dante did not dare to question it, though the frequency with which he dwells on it shows how it vexed his soul, and led him in *H.* iv. and here (ll. 15-36) to seek for every possible mitigation of the dogma. See also *Par.* xix. 70-96, xx. 87-138.

¹² Sordello is so absorbed in the joy of meeting Virgil that he asks no questions as to his companion, and does not notice that he is a living man till C. viii. 58.

"O glory of the Latins," said he, "whence
 Was shown the might of what our speech could do,
 Source of my native land's pre-eminence,
 What grace or merit brings thee to my view ?
 If I to hear thy words am worthy found, 20
 Say if from Hell thou com'st, and what purlieu."
 "Throughout the dolorous kingdom's every round,"
 He answered, "have I on my journey come:
 By power from Heaven led on I tread this ground.
 Not what I did, but did not, brought the doom 25
 To lose the sight of that bright Sun on high
 Thou seekest, which too late did me illume.
 A place there is of no sharp agony,
 But of dark shadows only, where lament
 Sounds not like wail of woe, but as a sigh ; 30
 There dwell I with young children innocent,
 Whom Death's sharp teeth have snatched ere yet
 they were
 Freed from the sin which with our birth is blent ;
 There stay I with the souls that had no share
 In the three saintly graces, yet unstained 35
 By vice, all other virtues fain would wear ;
 But if thou hast the power and knowledge gained,
 Give us some hint how we may sooner reach
 Where Purgatory's true gate is attained."

17 The Lombard Provençal poet does not cease to feel that he too has a share in the Latin which Virgil wrote, and of which he had shown the capacities for the highest poetry. Did Dante, as he wrote the line, feel that this was precisely what he was doing for the new Latin in which he wrote ?

21 A *v. l.*, "or" for "and," is adopted by many editors ; but Sordello could hardly be supposed to think that there were other abodes for souls than Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise. The question is, of course, equivalent to = "From what circle or what *bolgia* ?"

26 The beatific vision of God as the Sun of Righteousness.

28 Comp. *H.* iv. 25 for the description of the *limbus* in which there is the *pæna damni*, but not the *pæna sensûs* (Aquín. *Summ.* iii. 52, 2 ; *Suppl.* 69, 5). Line 33 embodies the doctrine of one baptism for the remission of sins.

34 The three theological or supernatural virtues are Faith, Hope, Charity (*Conv.* iii. 14 ; Aquín. *Summ.* sec. i. 62, 3). The "others" are the natural virtues, probably with a special reference to the four, Fortitude, Temperance, Justice, Prudence, as symbolised in the four stars of C. i. 23, xxxi.

He answered: "No fixed bound is given to each : 40
 'Tis free to me to go around, above :
 Far as I can, I thee will guide and teach.
But see how day e'en now doth downward move :
 We cannot take our upward course by night,
 'Twere well to think of rest in some fair cove. 45
Souls are there yonder, far off to the right ;
 If thou consent, to them I will thee lead ;
 And thou shalt know them, not without delight."
"How is this ?" answered he, "should one indeed
 Wish to mount up by night, would some be found 50
 To hinder, or would want of power impede ?"
And good Sordello drew along the ground
 His finger, saying, "When the sun has set,
 Thou couldst not pass beyond this line as bound.
Not that aught else thy onward course would let, 55
 As thou did'st mount, but Night's o'ershadowing
 gloom ;
 That and the want of power the will beset.
Well might we now with her descending come,
 And, wandering still, this hillside travel o'er,
 Whilst the horizon doth the day entomb." 60
Then spake my Master, wondering more and more :
 "Lead us," said he, "e'en there, where thou dost say
 That we may tarry and find joys, full store."
Then some short distance on our feet did stray,
 When I perceived the Mount was hollowed there, 65
 As in our world the valleys scoop their way.

⁴⁰ It will be remembered that the pilgrims are still in the outer precincts of the Mountain, the Ante-Purgatorium, and have not entered on Purgatory itself. Within those limits Sordello is free to act as guide, but no farther. Underlying the outer framework of the allegory there is the thought that even those who desire to enter on the work of purification in this life scarcely know how to begin unless they have the guidance either of experience or authority.

⁴³ The thought which here, and more emphatically in l. 53, underlies the symbol, is that, there is no safe walking in the spiritual life without the grace of God, which gives light that the soul needs, that illumining grace must precede the process of purification, and that, without knowledge, the will

"Thither," that shade said, "we will now repair,
 Where in itself the hillside makes a bend,
 And wait there till the coming day appear."
 'Twixt hill and plain a winding path did trend, 70
 Which led within the bosom of the vale,
 To where the ledge doth more than half descend.
 Gold, silver, crimson, ceruse' splendour pale,
 The Indian wood so lucent and serene, 75
 Fresh emerald, when its outer coat doth scale,
 Placed in that vale the plants and flowers between,
 Would each and all be found surpassed in hue,
 As less by greater overpowered is seen:
 Nor did we Nature's painting only view,
 But of a thousand fragrant odours sweet 80
 She made a mingled perfume strange and new.

walks in darkness and cannot climb, might lose its way even on the Mount of Purification, go backwards and not forwards.

⁷⁰ The description of the vivid beauty seems to come from the paint-box used by artists as Dante had seen it in Giotto's studio or used it in his own. The "Indian-wood" is probably indigo, but has been identified by some with ebony, and on this supposition the "emerald" is not the gem, but the pigment for emerald green used by illuminators. So Ruskin, *M. P.* iii. 228. The whole scene brings before us the bright colours of pre-Raphaelite art, the flowers and angels of Fra Angelico. Does the striving after the wider hope show itself in the contrast which this picture, almost as fair as that of the earthly Paradise of C. xxviii. 1-42, presents to the popular conception of the sufferings of the soul in Purgatory, or is there any deeper symbolic meaning? One can hardly accept the thought that the colours and the fragrance represent the natural and supernatural virtues, or the pomps and vanities in which the kings who are found there had once delighted. The key of the problem is perhaps found in the hymn which the souls were singing—*Salve Regina, Mater Misericordiae*—which appears in the Roman Breviary as a daily "Compline" hymn, sung, that is, before men retire to rest. The words that follow in that hymn come as from "the exiles from their home," "weeping in a valley of tears." Is not the thought implied that it is true of the fairest scenes of earth, of its purest joys, of the times of refreshing which are granted to the soul between its conversion and the sterner discipline which it needs, that they are not our rest, that our home is elsewhere? The company of penitents who are expiating their delayed penitence on earth by a proportionate delay are, it will be seen, those of rulers not long dead. Through Sordello, whose elegy on Blacas (see note on C. vi. 74) had made him the fit channel for such an utterance, Dante can pass his judgment upon the part which each had taken in the history of Italy. In Rodolph of Hapsburg, as in his son Albert (C. vi. 97), he could only see an example of neglected opportunities. That Emperor had never come to Italy. He might have healed her wounds. He left her to be tended by others (another side-glance at Henry VII.), whose help might come, perhaps, had already come, too late.

Then on the flowers and grass of that retreat,
Salve Regina singing, souls I saw,
 Who failed, outside the vale, our eyes to meet.
 "Ere the scant sun doth to its nest withdraw," 85
 Began the Mantuan, who our steps did guide,
 "Seek not that I to them your feet should draw.
 The acts and features from this border's side
 Ye will know better far, of each and all,
 Than if among them where the plain spreads wide. 90
 He who sits highest and whose looks recall
 The mien of one who leaves his task undone,
 And from whose lips no chants responsive fall,
 Rodolph the Emperor was, who might have won
 Health for the wounds that have Italia slain, 95
 While now her cure, by others, lingers on;
 And he from whom he comfort seems to gain
 Ruled o'er the land from whence the waters seek
 The Elbe from Moldau, from the Elbe the main.
 His name was Ottocar: as infant weak, 100
 Far better he than bearded Wenceslaus,
 His son, who lives in lust and ease full sleek.
 And that snub-nosed one who to counsel draws
 Close joined with him of aspect mild and sweet,
 Died in his flight and shamed the lily's cause. 105

⁹⁹ Bohemia is defined by its two boundary rivers, the Moldau, which gives its name to Moldavia, and the Elbe. Of Ottocar, elected king of Bohemia in 1253, we know that he took part in advising the execution of Conradin; that his subjects complained of his oppressions; that he was said to have been chosen Emperor and to have refused; that he was generally at war with the Emperor Rodolph, but was finally compelled to do homage to him, and died in a battle near Vienna in 1278. Here too was one who had no record to show worthy of his high calling, except the courage which Dante recognises as having been shown in his youth.

¹⁰¹ Wenceslaus IV., chosen king on his father's death, hardly seems to have deserved the epithet of "good" by which he was known in Bohemian history, and which still attaches to his name in a popular Christmas carol. He too refused opportunities, declined the kingdoms of Poland and Hungary which were offered to him, passed the latter on to his son Wenceslaus V., and led a life of slothful and sensual ease, which is here contrasted with his father's warlike achievements. His daughter married the son of the Emperor Henry VII.

¹⁰³ The large-nosed or snub-nosed one is Philip III. the Bold, son of

Behold, how he upon his breast doth beat!

That other see, how he, with many a sigh,
 Rests cheeks on hands, so finding couch full meet,
 Sire, and wife's sire, of France's infamy;
 They know his life how sin-stained and debased, ¹¹⁰
 And thence the grief that doth their spirits try.
 He who so stout-limbed seems, whose voice is raised
 In song with him, of nostrils strong and wide,
 Was with the girdle of all virtues graced;
 And if the youth who sitteth by his side, ¹¹⁵
 Had after him survived, as king to reign,
 From vase to vase had grace been well supplied,

Louis IX. He was defeated in an expedition against Peter III. of Arragon by that king's fleet, and died of a broken heart at Perpignan. His monument at Narbonne confirms the latter of the two readings as to the nose (Montf. in *Phil.*). The form of "aspect mild" is, as defined in l. 105, Henry of Navarre, brother of the good King Tebald of *H.* xxii. 52, whose daughter married Philip the Fair, and thus brought Navarre under the kings of France.

¹⁰⁹ The "infamy of France" is Philip the Fair, whom Dante singles out here and elsewhere for special condemnation. *Comp. C.* xx. 91, xxxii. 152, xxxiii. 45; *H.* xix. 85; *Par.* xix. 118. In his treatment of his subjects, of Boniface VIII., and of the Knights Templars, the poet could see nothing but self-seeking greed, the antithesis of the ideal king. Father and father-in-law are alike pained and shocked at his enormous guilt. Philip (*d.* 1314) was perhaps living at the time when Dante wrote.

¹¹² The stalwart one is Peter III. of Arragon (*b.* 1236). He married Constance, the daughter of Manfred (*C.* iii. 112), became king of Arragon in 1276, and of Sicily after the "Vespers" (Mar. 30, 1282), and died 1285. Dante's estimate of his character, possibly influenced by the fact that he had defeated Philip the Bold, is confirmed by *Vill.* vii. 103, and *Benr.* Peter had been excommunicated for infringing the rights of the Church in accepting the crown of Sicily, but had been absolved by the Archbishop of Tarragona.

¹¹³ Charles of Anjou, who is sufficiently identified by his aquiline nose, is painted in darker colours in *C.* xx. 61-69. Here he is rightly joined with Peter of Arragon, who had exclaimed on hearing of his death, that "the best knight in the world had been taken from it." The fact that he is placed not in Hell but in Purgatory implies that Dante had seen some elements of good, some germ of repentance, that led him to feel hopeful.

¹¹⁶ The youth who, had he lived, might have been as the Marcellus of Sicily, is Alphonso III. the Magnificent, who succeeded his father Peter as king of Arragon in 1285, and *d.* 1291 at the age of twenty. As it was, he secured the independence of Arragon against the claims of Charles of Anjou. The other heirs are James II., crowned 1286 as king of Sicily, in 1291 as king of Arragon, *d.* 1327. He surrendered Sicily to his father-in-law, Charles II. of Naples (*Par.* xix. 127). Frederick, however, asserted his claim to the island, of which he had been made king in 1276, and after a war between the two brothers obtained the mastery and occupied the throne

Which none can of the other heirs maintain;
 Frederick and Giacomo the kingdoms own;
 None the far better heritage attain. 120
 But seldom human excellence hath grown
 Through branches of the tree: He wills it so
 Who gives it, that we ask of Him alone.
 Eke to that large-nosed one my speech doth go,
 Nor less that Pier, who with him doth sing; 125
 Whence Provence and Apulia wail for woe.
 Plants from old seed do oft degenerate spring,
 As Constance of her spouse still makes more
 boast
 Than Beatrice and Margaret of their king.

till his death in 1337. He held his own against Philip the Fair, Charles of Valois, and Charles II. of Naples, against four Popes, Boniface VIII., Benedict XI., Clement V., and John XXII. The better heritage, to which none of the sons succeed, is that of the nobleness and equity of their father (comp. *Par.* xix. 127-138). Frederick's epitaph at Catania, however, speaks in high terms of him as

“*Legis
 Divinae cultor, humani juris amator.*”

But the epitaphs of kings are not always trustworthy chronicles. On the general question of the heredity of goodness and true nobility, see *Canz.* iii., and its exposition in *Conv.* iv.

¹²⁴ The remark just made is applied also to the descendants of Charles of Anjou. Of these, Charles II., commonly known as Ciotto, or the Cripple, joined James of Arragon in his fratricidal war with Frederick III. of Sicily. (Comp. *Par.* xix. 127 for his “one good deed.”) For Peter see note on l. 112.

¹²⁶ Provence had come to Charles II. through his mother, Beatrice, daughter of the last Count.

¹²⁸ The two princesses are not easily identified. (1) They may have been the daughters of Charles II., just named, one the wife of James, the other of Frederick of Arragon. Constance, the mother of those two princes, daughter of Manfred, was wife of Peter III. So taken, the lines are a somewhat involved way of repeating the fact that Charles of Anjou and Peter of Arragon were alike in having sons inferior to themselves. But so far as records go, the names of those princesses were Bianca and Eleonora. (2) Others (*Vent.*) have found in them the daughters of Raymond Berenger (comp. *Par.* vi. 128-135), Margarita, married to Louis IX., and Beatrice to Charles of Anjou. It is obvious, however, that Louis IX. has no proper place in the comparison. Dante would hardly have placed Peter III. of Arragon above the crusading saint. (3) A more satisfactory solution of the problem is found in taking the names as those of the two wives of Charles of Anjou, the second being the daughter of Eudes, Duke of Burgundy. The comparison is thus sharpened; as Charles was inferior to Peter of Arragon so in the same proportion has he sons inferior to himself.

See ye the king alone 'mid all the host, 130
 Henry of simple life, with England's crown ;
 He in his branches happier is than most.
 And he who lower than the rest bows down
 Is Marquis Guglielmo, who doth raise
 His eyes, through whom doth Alessandria's town 135
 Trouble Montferrat and the Canavese.

¹³⁰ As in the case of Saladin (*H.* iv. 129) and Sordello (*C.* vi. 59), the soul that has been conspicuously unlike others in its lifetime stands apart even behind the veil. The description of Henry III.'s character is sufficiently general, and may briefly have embodied the repute which he had gained throughout Europe during his long reign (1216-72). As the brother-in-law of Frederick II., his name was well known throughout Italy. It is probable, however, looking to the other allusions to English history to be found in the *Comm.* (*H.* xii. 120; *Par.* xix. 122), that Dante's estimate of Henry's character may have been drawn from what he heard in England from those who had personally known the saintly king. No words could better describe that character, devout, pure, lacking strength and energy, preferring masses to sermons, because it was better to have an hour's communion with a friend than to hear an hour's talk about him, than the "simple life" of Dante. The "better issue" is Edward I., in whose work as a lawgiver Dante may have seen, as the name of the English Justinian indicates, something like an approach to his ideal of a true king, and of whom Villani (viii. 90) speaks as one of the wisest Christians and most valiant princes of his time.

¹³⁴ William VII., Marquis of Montferrat, at first (1274) the ally, afterwards the opponent, of Charles of Anjou. The name presents many points of contact with the history of Europe, his first wife having been the daughter of Richard, Earl of Gloucester, his second of Alphonso X. of Castile, and his daughter Iolanthe having been married to the Greek Emperor, Andronicus II. Palæologus. Alessandria (named after Pope Alexander III., its founder) rebelled against him (1290) in conjunction with Asti and other towns in the north-west of Italy. The Marquis was defeated and taken, and died in prison in 1292. His son John declared war against the Alessandrins, but they, in alliance with Matteo Visconti, invaded Montferrat (stretching from the right bank of the Po to the Ligurian Alps) and the Canavese, lying between the Graian Alps and the Po. Dante praises him for his generosity in *Conv.* iv. 6.

*The Angels that guard the Valley—Nino of Gallura—The
Three Stars—The Serpent Foe—Currado Malaspina*

THE hour was come which brings back yearning
new

To those far out at sea, and melts their hearts,
The day that they have bid sweet friends adieu;
Whereat the pilgrim fresh with strong love starts,
If he perchance hear bells, far off yet clear, 5
Which seem to mourn the day's life that departs,
When I, unheeding sounds that met mine ear,
On one that then rose up began to gaze,
Who bade us with his hands to stand and hear.
He clasped his palms, and both did upward raise, 10
Fixing upon the distant East his eyes,
As telling God, "Nought else such joy conveys."
Te lucis ante, did devoutly rise
From out his lips, and with such dulcet tone,
It bore me from myself in ecstasies, 15
And then the others left him not alone,
Sweetly, devoutly, to the hymn's full end,
With eyes upon the sphere supernal thrown.

¹ Apart from the exceeding beauty and tenderness of the whole passage, it has the special interest of being obviously a personal reminiscence. The poet had known what it was to hear the Ave Maria bell as the evening closed, and as the ship in which he sailed was moving farther and farther from the shore. The starting-point of such a voyage may have been Pisa or Genoa, and the occasion the journey which took him to Arles (*H.* ix. 112; *Par.* x. 136). Or had he sailed with Henry VII. from Genoa to Pisa?

⁷ The practical suspension of one sense while the whole mind was absorbed in the activity of another is again a personal characteristic (*C.* iv. 1-12). The soul which is now seen is probably that of Nino (abbreviation of Ugolino), judge of Gallura in Sardinia (l. 53), a grandson of Ugolino (*H.* xxxiii.), by whom Fra Gomita was condemned to death (*H.* xxii. 81). After a five years' war with Guido di Montefeltro (1288-93) he died in 1296. His heart was deposited, by his wish, two years after his death, in the Church of the Franciscans at Lucca. He was a personal friend of Dante's, and was with him at Caprona (*H.* xxi. 95). The act and look of devotion—hands clasped in prayer, face turned eastward—of which we read here, were, we may well believe, what Dante had noted as characteristic during his lifetime.

¹³ *Te lucis ante terminum*. The Compline hymn of the Roman Breviary, and therefore coming naturally after the Ave Maria or *Angelus*.

Now, Reader, to the truth thine eyes down
bend,

For now so thin and subtle is the veil
Such barrier thou may'st easily transcend.

I saw that gentle army hushed and pale,
In silence upward gaze with fixèd eye,
As those with whom meek lowly hopes prevail.

And coming forth, descending from on high,
I saw two angels, each with sword of fire,
Truncated flames, of forms that points deny.

Verdant as new-born leaflets their attire
Was seen, while they with green wings onward
drove,

Beaten and blown in many a breezy spire.

¹⁹ What is the inner meaning which the poet wishes us to read between the lines? Probably it lies in the fact that the hymn which the spirits sang spoke of troubled dreams and other incidents of the bodily life which they had left (*Procul recedant somnia* . . .). In C. xi. 22 we have a like fact and a formal explanation of it in connection with the Lord's Prayer, and here, as there, the thought is that the Church behind the veil joins in the prayers and praises of the Church on earth, even when they have ceased to be personally applicable. Possibly a yet further thought lies below the surface, *sc.* that the saints of God may rightly pray, in sympathy with others, against perils which they themselves have in one form overcome; the approach of the serpent in l. 95 suggesting yet again that till the work of purification has been definitely commenced, even the disembodied spirit is liable, perhaps through memory, to the allurements of its own besetting sin. Comp. the striking passage, which may have been in Dante's mind, in Augustine (*Conf.* x. 30).

²⁰ In the Roman Breviary the hymn *Te lucis* is followed, after the *Nunc Dimittis* and versicles, by a Collect: "Visit, O God, we beseech, this habitation, and drive far from it all snares of the enemy; let Thy holy angels dwell in it." The souls are clearly assumed to have said the prayer, and the appearance of the angels is the answer to it. The description reminds us of the angels of Fra Angelico, and every feature has its meaning, which, as l. 20 indicates, is not far to seek. There are the "flaming swords" of Gen. iii. 24, no longer used to bar the way to the Tree of Life, but for man's defence, and the points are broken to indicate that even the terrors of the Word of God, which is "the sword of the Spirit," are abated by the mercy and the love revealed in Christ; and their wings and their garments are alike of green, which is the hue of hope (C. iii. 135). That, too, was the colour of Beatrice's mantle (C. xxx. 32). Their fair golden locks assumed a supernatural beauty which the eye could not bear to look on; and they have come from the bosom of her who is no longer the *Mater Dolorosa*, but the *Mater Misericordiarum*, who appears in the heaven of stars (*Par.* xxiii. 73), but has her abode eternally in the empyrean (*Par.* xxxi. 116), which is the dwelling-place of God.

One near us came a little space above ;
 One on the bank, o' the other side, did light,
 So that the crowd between them both did move.
 Well could I mark in them the head so bright,
 But at the face the gazing eye must quail, 85
 As shrinks each sense beneath excess of might.
 "Both of them came, as guardians of the vale,
 From Mary's bosom," then Sordello said,
 "Lest, coming quick, the serpent should prevail."
 Then I, who knew not where he might invade, 40
 Turned and drew nearer to those arms so true,
 So chill a terror had my spirit frayed.
 Then spake Sordello ; "Now this valley through
 Pass we to speak to those great souls below ;
 Full sweet 'twill be for them to look on you." 45
 But three steps down I deem that I did go,
 And found myself beneath ; there watching me
 I saw one, as if longing me to know.
 Already now the air grew dark to see,
 But not so that, between his eyes and mine, 50
 It failed to show what erst my sight did flee.
 Then he and I did, each to each, incline ;
 Ah Nino, noble judge, how glad was I
 Not with the damned to see that face of thine !
 No greetings pleasant did we there pass by ; 55
 And then he asked, "How long is't since thou'rt come
 Through the wide seas to where this Mount soars
 high ?"

⁴² As one who is not yet purified, the pilgrim shrinks in terror from the thought that, though he has escaped Hell, the Tempter may still assail him. Even the new presence of the angels is not enough to reassure him, and he turns in his terror to the human wisdom of his guide.

⁴⁵ The presence of the poet is welcome, not only, if at all, because he can immortalise the fame of the great ones of the earth, but, as in C. v. 87, 133, vi. 26, because he can himself pray, and ask others to pray, for their more rapid growth in holiness.

⁵² In spite of the gathering darkness Dante recognises his friend. The words of l. 54 imply that he had not been quite easy as to Nino's doom in the other world. It had been a comfort not to find him in Hell.

⁵⁷ The "far waters" are those near Ostia (C. ii. 101).

"Ah," said I, "through the realms of mournful
gloom

I came this morn, and in my first life still,
Albeit I seek the other as I roam."

60

And when my answer did their hearing fill,
Sordello and the other drew aside

As those whom great astonishment doth thrill.

One turned to Virgil, and the other cried

To one who sat there, "Rise, Currado, rise,

65

Come and see now what God's grace doth provide;"

Then turned to me: "By those great charities

Thou ow'st to Him who ever so doth hide

His primal Why, that there no passage lies.

When thou shalt pass beyond these waters wide,

70

Tell my Giovanna that for me she pray,

Where prayers which pure ones pour are satisfied;

Her mother's love, I trow, hath passed away,

Since she hath changed her weeds of whitest

hue:

Well may the sad one wish for them to-day!

75

⁶² Sordello, it would seem, had not recognised the fact that Dante was still living; there had been no sun to cast a shadow (C. vi. 56), and the Mantuan was so absorbed in Virgil that he had failed to note the breathing which revealed the fact to others (C. ii. 67-68).

⁶⁵ For the history of Currado Malaspina, see l. 118.

⁶⁷ The limit of man's knowledge in presence of the Infinite Wisdom is emphasised again, as it had been in C. iii. 34-39.

⁷¹ Of Giovanna, the daughter of Nino, who, on her father's death (1296), was commended by Boniface VIII. to the care of the citizens of Volterra, little is known beyond the fact that she died young (in 1300 she was only nine). Commentators differ as to her husband's name, or indeed the fact of her being married. There is an almost infinite pathos in the longing of the father for the "innocent" prayers of his child. The widow, Beatrice, was daughter of Obizzo, Marquis of Este, and in 1300 (but after the date of the vision) took Galeazzo Visconti of Milan, as her second husband, eleven years younger than herself. Line 75 implies that Dante, writing *circa* 1314, knew that the marriage had not been a happy one. Lines 76, 77, perhaps suggest that Dante's separation from his wife seemed to him to have led, on her side, to something like indifference. We note in passing, (1) the Italian origin of widows' weeds (l. 74); (2) the mediæval use of heraldic achievements (*vulgo* "hatchments") over burial-places. A viper biting a boy was the badge of the Milanese Visconti, a cock the official "bearing" of the Judge of Gallura. The latter would have been an honourable record of a faithful life. The former was far otherwise than that.

Thus clearly in her case is brought to view
 How long in women dwells love's fire alone,
 If sight or touch do not the glow renew;
 The Viper, by the hosts of Milan known,
 Will not for her make such fair burial-place, 80
 As would the Cock Gallura bears have done."
 So spake he, and his brow was marked with trace
 Of that true righteous zeal which, in the heart,
 Doth, with a measured temper, burn apace.
 My eager eye as if for Heaven did start, 85
 Still to the point where stars move on most slow,
 As wheel where nearest to its axle-part.
 And my Guide said, "Why look thine eyes up so?"
 And I to him: "At those three bright fires there,
 Wherewith this hither pole is all aglow." 90
 And he to me: "The four stars bright and clear
 Thou saw'st this morn are low in yonder track,
 And these have mounted where before they were;
 And as he spoke Sordello drew him back,
 And said, "Behold, there comes our Adversary!" 95
 And pointed with his hand lest sight should lack.
 There, on that side where no defence doth lie
 For that small valley, was a serpent seen;
 Such, may be, led Eve bitter food to try.

⁸³ One feels, as has been said (*Klackz.* p. 8), that, consciously or unconsciously, Dante paints himself, and that the lines might be placed under his portrait.

⁸⁸ Astronomic commentators have, after their manner, identified the stars with α and ζ in the Ship, and α in the Eridanus, not throwing much light thereby on Dante's meaning, but suggesting the thought that here also, as in C. i. 23, he may have been drawing on the information he had gained from Marco Polo, or other travellers in the southern hemisphere. The allegorists, with better right, find in them the three Christian graces, Faith, Hope, Charity, as contrasted with the four natural virtues of C. i. 20 (comp. C. xxxi. 104-111). As they rise the others fall; that which was glorious "having no glory by reason of the glory that excelleth" (2 Cor. iii. 10).

⁹⁸ The presence of the Serpent-tempter brings us face to face with a theological difficulty. The dogma of the Church was that souls in Purgatory were at least free from temptation, and that dogma Dante endorses in C. xi. 22-24, xxvi. 132. What then is meant by that which seems to contradict the dogma? The answer is found partly perhaps in the somewhat technical plea that the souls which the Serpent visits are not yet in Purgatory, but

The evil snake wound grass and flowers between, 100
 Wriggling its head at times and licking well
 Its back, as when a beast itself doth clean.
 I saw it not, and therefore cannot tell,
 How downward swooped the falcons of high Heaven,
 Yet that both swooped was plainly what befell. 105
 Hearing the air before their green wings driven,
 The serpent fled, and to their post on high
 The angels turned, with ordered pace and even.
 The spirit who had to the Judge drawn nigh
 When he had called, through all that conflict dire 110
 Had never ceased on me to fix his eye.
 "So may the light that leads thee with its fire,
 Find wax enough in thy free-will's estate
 As needeth for the azure plains up higher,"
 So it began, "if thou can'st now relate 115
 True news of Valdimagra or its coast,
 Tell me, for there it was I once waxed great.
 Currado Malaspina, so I boast
 My name, though not the elder, yet his kin;
 The love which here is cleansed mine own had
 most." 120

expiating their delay on earth by a delay behind the veil; more substantially, in the thought that Dante wrote out of the fulness of his own experience of the night-troubles of the soul in the earlier stages of conversion (see note on l. 19). He had felt what a spirit like his own has described as the "miserable power" of dreams (J. H. Newman, *Verses*, p. 127) to throw the soul back upon the memories of a guilty past, which the waking spirit would not entertain for an instant. And the tempter comes on the side where there is no rampart, the weak, defenceless side of what had been the soul's besetting sin, among the green grass and flowers, the blameless joys of life, gliding and licking itself as though at last it had ceased to be venomous.

¹⁰⁴ The "heavenly falcons" are, of course, the angels who have come, in Spenser's phrase, "against foul fiends to aid us militant."

¹¹² The "wax" of man's free-will is to feed the light which God has given, and without which it could not have burnt. In Augustine's words, "*Qui creavit te sine te non salvabit te sine te.*" The "highest azure" (literally *enamel*) may be either the earthly Paradise at the summit of the Mount, or the yet higher Heaven of the empyrean.

¹¹⁸ The history of the Malaspina family is interwoven with that of four centuries of Italian history as the Lords of Lunigiana, of which Carrara and the Val di Magra, opening on the Bay of Spezzia (*H.* xxiv. 145; *Par.* ix. 89) form a part. As Guelphs they took part under Obizzo II. with the league of

"Oh," said I to him, "ne'er thy lands within
 Have I yet been, but where can one abide
 In Europe, where due praise they do not win?
 The fame by which thy house is magnified
 Proclaims its lords, proclaims its country too, 125
 So that he knows who never thither hied.
 And as I hope to mount on high, to you
 I swear your great race hath not forfeited
 The glory to free purse and sharp sword due.
 Nature and use such grace upon it shed, 130
 That though a vile head leads the world astray,
 Sole it goes right, and scorns wrong path to tread."

the Lombard cities against Frederick Barbarossa. The elder, Conrad, succeeded Obizzo in 1193, and was in his turn succeeded by his sons Manfred, Moroello, Frederick, and Albert, and the Conrad who now meets us is the son of Frederick. The territory was divided in proportions, into which we need not enter, among the children and grandchildren of Conrad I. Moroello (*d.* 1375), the son of Albert, appears in *H.* xxiv. 145 as the storm-cloud of the Val di Magra. His cousin, another Moroello, son of Manfred, although opposed in politics, was a personal friend and protector of the poet's, who is said in the letter which bears the name of Fra Ilario (possibly apocryphal) to have dedicated the *Purgatorio* to him, and he and his son Franceschino welcomed Dante as a guest in 1306, in the earlier period of his exile. An earlier Malaspina was conspicuous among the patrons of the Provençal Troubadours (*Weg.* 37; *Faur.* i. 257), and the taste for culture may have been inherited by his descendants. The whole passage that follows is obviously the utterance of the poet's gratitude.

¹²⁰ The words point probably to the special generosity which led Conrad to divide his patrimony among his brothers and their children. He too was "*notus in fratres animi paterni*," like the Procleus of *Hor. Od.* ii. 2, 6.

¹²¹ Written, we must believe, after 1306, but from the assumed standpoint of 1300. The European, at least the Italian, fame of the house of the Malaspini was shown conspicuously in the fact that their territory was looked on as a kind of neutral borderland in which the exiles of all parties were sure of finding a safe refuge.

¹²⁹ The "glory of the purse" is, of course, more than that of being one of the richest families of Italy, and includes the right use of riches. The Malaspini seemed to Dante the embodiment of the idea of true nobility in the *Canzone* which forms the basis of *Conv.* iv. From his point of view *Noblesse oblige* might have been taken as their motto. *Comp. Lit.* s. v. *Malaspina*.

¹³⁰ The construction of the line is ambiguous and the meaning uncertain. The "guilty head" has been taken for Satan as the "prince of this world," for Rome, for the Curia Romana, for Boniface VIII., for the Emperor, who was negligent of his duties. On the whole, the reference to the Pope seems most probable. Dante will not sacrifice his principles to his compliments and makes it a chief point of praise that the Malaspini are good and noble in spite of being Guelphs, that they are the exception which proves the rule.

And he: "Now go; for ere the sun shall stay
 Seven times at rest in Aries' bed again,
 Which he with all his four feet holds in sway,
 This, thine opinion courteous, in thy brain
 Shall be as to its centre riveted
 With firmer nails than speech of other men,
 Unless the course of justice stays its tread."

135

CANTO IX

*The Vision of the Eagle—The Dream Journey—The Vision
 of Lucia—The Steps of the Portal of Purgatory—The Seven
 P's—The Gold and Silver Keys*

SHE who of yore shared old Tithonus' bed,
 On the far Eastern gallery grew white,
 As from her sweet friend's arms her steps were led :

¹³⁴ At Easter 1300 the sun was in the sign of Aries (*H. i.* 38). Within seven years from that date (the Canto was obviously written after 1307), Dante would know from experience the large-hearted hospitality of the house of Lunigiana. The picture of the four feet of the Ram covering the pillow of the Ecliptic is obviously drawn from the star-maps which Dante had used in his astronomical studies.

¹ The readings vary between Titone = Tithonus, the husband of Aurora, doomed to the dreary immortality of perpetual old age, and Titan = the Sun. Volumes have been written on its meaning, and even the carefully condensed summary in *Scart.* occupies thirteen closely printed pages. With the former reading we have a description of the dawn of day, or possibly, assuming that Dante followed a mediæval legend (Jacop. della Lana), that there were two Auroras, the rising of the moon. If we read "Titan," then the concubine is Tethys, who, in Greek mythology, is the bride of Oceanus, but may have been thought of as the concubine of the Sun. *Scart.*, who adopts this reading, takes the "sweet friend" as the Sun, but explains the line as meaning that the ocean's gleam of whiteness was "outside his arms," *sc.*, that it came from the moon and not the sun. Witte (*D. F. i.* 27) agrees with *Scart.* as to its being the moonrise, not the sunrise, that is painted, laying stress upon the fact that an ideal computation of the position of the stars for the latitude and longitude of the Mount of Purgatory would give 9 P.M. as the hour of the moon's rising on the Easter Monday of 1300, and that at 8.30 P.M. its glimmer would be seen in the tail of the Scorpion. I incline to the reading "Tithonus," and to the explanation that it was the very earliest gleam of dawn, when the Eastern horizon is faintly lit up and the sky is still bright with stars. At this hour Dante, who had kept watch till then, fell asleep.

² It has been urged that the picture is true of moonlight, scarcely so of sunrise. We have the

Her brow with many a jewelled star was bright,
 Set in the figure of that creature cold, 5
 Which with its tail is nations wont to smite.
 And of the steps where she her course doth hold,
 The night had traversed two, when there we stayed,
 And the third now its wings did downward fold,
 When I, as by my Adam-flesh downweighed, 10
 Conquered by sleep upon the grass reclined,
 Which we all five our resting-place had made.
 It was the hour when swallow to the wind
 Chants her sad songs as morning's dawn draws
 near,—
 Perchance as ancient sorrows haunt her mind,— 15
 And when our soul, more alien from the sphere
 Of flesh, and less to rush of hot thoughts given,
 As half-divine looks forth in vision clear;
 I seemed to see in dreams, as in mid-heaven,
 An eagle hovering with its plumes of gold, 20
 With wide wings poised to swoop when downward
 driven ;

*"Nec candida cursus,
 Luna negat : splendet tremulo sub lumine pontus"*

of *Æn.* vii. 8, 9, not the "*jamque rubescebat radiis mare*," of ll. 25, 26. But the first gleams of day that precede the sunrise have often this white, cold shining. The steps by which night travels are not hours but "watches" of the night, and this brings us to *circ.* 3 A.M.

¹¹ The disembodied spirits appear as not needing sleep. Adam's nature, in Dante (not the taint of original sin, but simply the "corruptible body which presseth down the soul," C. xi. 43; *Ovid*, ix. 15), leads him to fall asleep. He could not as yet "watch one hour."

¹³ The sleep lasts, according as we assume a solar or lunar aurora, for six hours or two or three. Then comes a dream at the hour when dreams are true (*H.* xxvi. 7), when the swallow's plaintive song is heard. The "former woes" refer to the transformation of Procne and Philomela as told by *Ovid* (*Met.* vi. 412-676). Dante, it would seem, identifies Philomela with the swallow, Procne with the nightingale (C. xvii. 19). *Ovid*, curiously enough, in his

*"Quarum petit altera sylvas,
 Altera tecta subit"—(Met. vi. 668),*

seems to leave the question open.

²⁰ The eagle, as the bird of Jupiter, seen from the classical standpoint, suggested the story of Ganymede (*Hom. Il.* xx. 232; *Æn.* v. 253). With Dante, however, there was another memory, and the eagle recalled the four

And I, it seemed, then found me where of old
 Young Ganymede his kindred did forsake,
 Rapt to the Council which the high Gods hold :
 Methought, perchance he on his prey doth break 25
 Here only as by use, and scorneth quite
 That spoil gained elsewhere he should upward take.
 Then wheeling, as me seemed, a wider flight,
 Like a dread thunderbolt he downward came,
 And snatched me upward to the burning light. 30
 There seemed both he and I to feel the flame,
 And that imagined fire so scorched, it broke
 Perforce the slumber which my soul o'ercame.
 Not otherwise, of old, Achilles woke,
 Turning his opened eyes on all around, 35
 And knowing not the place that met his look,

living creatures of Ezekiel (i. 10) and St. John (*Rev.* iv. 7), perhaps also the Church's hymn on the Evangelist, as symbolised by the eagle—

*"Volat avis sine meta,
 Quo nec vates, nec propheta,
 Evolvit altius,"*

and so became a fit emblem of Lucia (see note on *H.* ii. 97), as the symbol of illuminating grace. Even the Ganymede story is obviously viewed as having an allegorical or mystic meaning, and setting forth the rapture of the soul to a region above earthly things.

²⁵ Translated into the language of theology, the thought of Dante was that the gift of spiritual illumination comes ordinarily ("perchance") to those who have already made some progress in their conversion. *Deut.* xxxii. 10 may have suggested the imagery. The "fire" was that of the empyrean sphere to which Dante was now translated in his vision, as anticipating the actual completion of his pilgrimage.

²⁹ The thought implied is that the rapture involved an element of terror as well as joy for mortal man as yet unpurified; that, as in Schiller's words—

*"Schrecklich ist es Deiner Wahrheit
 Sterbliches Gefäss zu seyn."*

³⁴ The reference is to Dante's favourite, Statius (*Achill.* i. 247-250), and the passage is worth quoting, both for its own beauty and as showing how Dante appreciated in others that poetry of childhood of which the *Comm.* supplies so many instances (*C.* xxx. 44, 79; *H.* xxiii. 38)—

*"Cum pueri tremefacta quies, oculique jacentis
 Infusum sensere diem, stupet aere primo:
 Quæ loca? qui fluctus? ubi Pelion? omnia vera
 Atque ignota videt, dubitatque agnoscere matrem."*

What time his mother unto Scyros' ground
 Bore him from Chiron in her arms asleep,
 Whence the Greeks dragged him, there in hiding
 found.

Then I roused me, when fled that slumber deep 40
 From off my face, and I, in sore affright,
 Was as one chilled with fear, whose blood doth creep.

Near me my Comforter alone in sight
 Appeared ; the sun two hours had sped his way,
 And my gaze turned where shore and sea unite. 45

Then said my Master : "Cast off thy dismay,
 Sure that thus far a good course is begun ;
 Check not thy powers, but let them have full play.

Now shall thy steps through Purgatory run :
 See there the high cliff that doth round it go, 50
 See where it seems disjoined, the entrance won.

Just now at dawn before the sun's full glow,
 While sleep was on thy spirit inwardly,
 Upon the flowers that deck the ground below

A lady came and said, 'Lo ! Lucia I : 55
 Let me take him who lieth sleeping there,
 And I will speed him in his course on high.'

⁴⁴ The pilgrim's surprise at finding that it was nearly the third hour of the day may possibly confirm the view that the opening lines of the Canto described the rising of the moon. The solution of the problem is probably to be found in the fact that the hymn which the souls were singing when the travellers entered the valley of the kings was that of the Compline Service, *sc.*, after 9 P.M., that after this the three stars are shining brightly. Thus there is time for the attack and discomfiture of the Serpent, and then for the meetings with Nino and Malaspina. This would bring us to about midnight as the hour when Dante is supposed to fall asleep. What startles him and reminds him of Achilles is that he looks out only on the ocean. The valley with its flowers, the souls of the mighty kings, have all vanished. He learns that his vision was a reality ; Lucia, his patron saint, who dwells with his Beatrice in Paradise, with her *nomen et omen*, has quickened his slow ascent. He can enter within the gates of Purgatory, which he has thus reached. I may add to the facts stated in note on *H. ii. 97*, in connection with Lucia, that one of the churches in Florence that bear her name stands in the *Via de' Bardi* ; presumably, therefore, in the street in which Beatrice's husband lived. This was probably the church in which he had gazed on his beloved one as she listened to the praises of the Queen of Angels (*V. N. c. 5*). S. Mary, Lucia, Beatrice, and, I may add, Matilda, were indissolubly connected in his thoughts.

Sordello stayed, and those good spirits dear:

She took thee up, and as the day grew bright,

She mounted, and I too, her footsteps near; 60

Then here she laid thee, but first drew my sight

With her fair eyes, to that gate opened wide:

Then she and sleep together took their flight."

As one whose doubting heart, once certified,

Full soon doth into comfort change his fear, 65

When Truth no more the covering veil doth hide,

So was I changed, as though no care were near;

My Leader saw me, and along the rock

Moved, and toward the height I followed there.

Reader! thou seest well how I unlock 70

My theme's rich stores; then wonder not, I

pray,

If with more art I fertilise its stock.

So we drew nigh, and in the place did stay

Where first an opening narrow seemed to break,

Like passage which through stone walls gives a

way. 75

A gate I saw, and three steps upward make

An access to it, each of diverse hue,

And there a Warder sat who never spake.

61 The line is full of suggestive associations. (1) If Lucia be the earlier saint of that name, we remember that she had torn out her eyes because they had given rise to an unholy passion in her heathen lover. (2) As the eyes of the "gentle lady" of *Canz.* xiv. are explained in *Conv.* ii. 16 as meaning the demonstrations of philosophy, so here those of Lucia stand for the intuitive perception that the way of purification is now open for the repentant souls.

70 Like the "whoso hath ears to hear" of the great Master (*Matt.* xiii. 9), the address to the reader, as in *H.* ix. 61; *Par.* x. 22, is a call not only, or chiefly, if at all, to admire the poet's mastery in thought and speech, but to put forth all his power to read the inner meaning which lies below the surface of all its outward beauty.

75 The entrance to Hell was wide enough (*H.* v. 20). Here we have the "strait gate and the narrow way" of *Matt.* vii. 13.

78 For the three steps see ll. 94-102. The Warder of the gate is the Angel of Purgatory. The sword has been explained as the symbol of righteous judgment in general or priestly jurisdiction in particular, or "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God" (*Eph.* vi. 17). Possibly all three thoughts are fused together.

And as mine eyes gained clearer, fuller view,
 I saw him seated on the topmost stair, 80
 With face that did my power to gaze subdue.
 In his right hand a naked sword he bare,
 Which upon us its rays reflected still,
 So that in vain mine eyes oft met its glare.
 "Speak where ye are; and tell me what your will," 85
 So he began to speak. "Where is your guide?
 Take heed lest this your journey work you ill."
 "A heavenly Lady," then my Chief replied,
 "Familiar with these things, but just before
 Said to us, 'See the gate, thence pass inside.'" 90
 "And may she speed your footsteps more and more!"
 Began that Warder, with kind speech and fair:
 "Come forward then, and these our steps pass
 o'er."
 Thither did we draw nigh, and that first stair 95
 Was of white marble, polished so and clean,
 It mirrored all my features as they were.

⁸⁶ The question of the Warder-angel implies that the souls that came to the gate were commonly brought thither by the angel appointed for that ministry. Here the place of the angel had been taken, in the case of the living man, by Lucia, *i.e.*, by special supernatural illumination. The warning that follows the question was to remind men that the work of the soul's purification was no light matter, to be entered on with a light heart. Men must count the cost, or they would fail in it (*Luke* xiv. 28-30). The angel is, as it were, the confessor of the souls behind the veil.

⁹⁴ The three steps are probably intended to answer to the three elements of penitence, as defined by the Schoolmen—contrition, confession, satisfaction (*Lomb. Sent.* iv. 16A). But, as the elaborated description shows, that formula had been received by Dante in all its full significance. (1) The white marble in which he saw himself mirrored indicates the self-knowledge without which contrition is incomplete, the purity of conscience which can recall the memories of past sins without fresh guilt. (2) The dark gloomy hue, the broken and rough surface, of the second stair, symbolise the state of the heart as laid bare in confession, in all its black unrighteousness. (3) The crimson hue of the porphyry is, in like manner, the fit emblem of the charity which is the spring of all true works of satisfaction, possibly also of the "blood of price" shed upon the cross, blood which was thought of partly as an expiation for the sins of the world, partly as the outward token of a burning and consuming love. Lastly, the adamant (not "diamond") threshold upon which the angel was seated, represents at once the rock-foundation of the Church's power to pardon, and the firmness of soul required in the confessor who is the instrument by which that power is exercised.

The second darker than dusk perse was seen,
 Of stone all rugged, rough and coarse in grain,
 With many a crack its length and breadth between.
 The third, which o'er the others towers amain, 100
 Appeared as if of fiery porphyry,
 Like blood that gushes crimson from the vein.
 On this, his two feet firmly fixed, saw I
 God's angel, seated on the threshold stone,
 Which seemed a rock of adamant to the eye. 105
 O'er the three steps my Guide then led me on,
 With all good will, and said, "Now humbly pray
 That bolts and bars to us be open thrown."
 Then prostrate at the holy feet I lay:
 Mercy I begged, and opening of the gate, 110
 And thrice I smote my breast in contrite way.
 Then on my brow he did delineate
 With his sword's point, seven P's, and said, "When there
 Thou go'st within, cleanse these wounds obstinate."
 Ashes or earth dug out, left dry and bare, 115
 Would of one colour with his garments be,
 And from beneath them he two keys did bear.
 Of silver one, of gold the other key;
 First he the white, and then the yellow plied
 Upon the door, and thus he gladdened me. 120

¹⁰⁰ The customary ritual of penitents on earth, the act of prostration at the feet of priest or bishop, the triple smiting on the breast (*Luke* xviii. 13), representing the threefold sins of thought, word, and deed (*D. C. A.* ii. 1593, 1598), is transferred to the penitence completed on the Mount of Purification.

¹¹² The seven P's (*peccata*) stand for the seven deadly sins of the mediæval system of penitence, which are purified in the seven circles of the Mount—Pride, Envy, Anger, Sloth, Avarice, and its opposite yet kindred sin, Prodigality (*H.* vii.), Gluttony, and Lasciviousness. It will be noted that the classification differs from that given in *H.* xi., the latter being more the poet's own deduction from the great principles of ethics as laid down by Aristotle and developed by Aquinas, the former that which was authoritatively laid down in the Church's discipline of confession. In the one case, the classification was determined from the standpoint of guilt and punishment; in the other, from that of possible discipline and amendment. Comp. Witte's essay on Dante's *Sünden-System* in *D. F.* ii. 121-160; Ozan. pp. 99-102; *D. C. A.* s. v. *Penitence*; Chaucer's *Persone's Tale*.

¹¹⁸ The key of gold represents the authority of the Church as absolving sin, its power to absolve coming from the "precious blood" of Christ (1 *Pet.*

"When either of these keys in vain is tried
So that the lock it turns not readily,"

Said he to me, "this door will closed abide.
Costlier is one, the other bids us ply
More art and skill ere through the wards it
turn,

125

For this is that which doth the knot untie.
From Peter hold I them; from him I learn
Rather to ope in error than to close,
If only at my feet men kneel and mourn."

And then the sacred door he open throws,
Saying, "Enter in, but also take good heed:
He is cast forth who looks back as he goes."

130

And when upon their hinges did recede
The swivels of that consecrated door,
That are of metal, loud, and strong at need,
Not with so sharp a note, or deep-toned roar,
Tarpeia opened when from it was ta'en
Metellus, and it stood with emptied store.

135

i. 18); that of silver, requiring more skill in its application, is the confessor's discernment, distinguishing the kinds and degrees of sin and the appropriate discipline for each. Both are required for the pardon and purification of the penitent, but the latter comes first in order of application. In the exercise of the power committed to it the Church leans to mercy rather than severity. The possibility of error in the angel rises from the fact that he is thought of, not, so to speak, in his angelic nature, but as the representative of the priestly confessor.

¹³² The warning is substantially the same as that of *Luke* ix. 62, xvii. 32; *Heb.* vi. 4. It also is obviously addressed, not to souls in Purgatory, but to the penitent who willingly anticipates on earth the work of discipline and purification.

¹³⁴ The special term used for gate (*regge*) seems to have been applied technically to the entrance into the part of the church, the porch or narthex, which, as in the ancient basilicas, was set apart for penitents (*Scart.*).

¹³⁶ Lucan (iii. 154) is still present to the poet's mind. Cæcilius Metellus was guardian of the public treasure which was kept under the Tarpeian rock. When Cæsar crossed the Rubicon and marched on Rome, he compelled Metellus to surrender it, and then

"*Tunc rupes Tarpeia sonat, magnoque reclusas
Testatur stridore fores.*"

Does the creaking of the hinges imply that they were rusty through long disuse? that penitential discipline and the art of the wise confessor and guide of souls were becoming obsolete? Comp. C. x. 2; *H.* i. 63.

At the first thunderous peal I turned again,
 And *Te Deum laudamus* seemed to hear, 140
 In voices mingled with melodious strain:
 And what I heard upon my mind did bear
 Such impress as it oft is wont to take,
 When men their singing with the organ share,
 For now were heard, now not, the words they spake. 145'

CANTO X

*The first Circle of the Mountain—The Sculptures on the Wall
 —The Cleansing of the Proud*

WHEN he had passed the threshold of the gate
 Which souls leave little used through evil lust,
 In that this makes the crooked path seem straight,
 I heard the sound of doors in closing thrust,
 And if towards it I had turned mine eyes, 5
 What plea for pardon of that fault were just?
 We through a rifted rock did upward rise,
 Which now on this side, now o' the other wound,
 E'en as a wave now rushes on, now flies.

¹⁴⁰ The great Ambrosian Canticle was the Church's hymn of triumphant joy, sung after victories in war. Here it is the utterance of joy over the sinner that repents, and it is sung by those who are already some way advanced on the same journey as the penitent. Was there in this a reminiscence of a *Te Deum* sung by Franciscan Friars when Dante was admitted as a member of the Tertiary Order? (*H.* xvi. 106.) In any case, we may trace in ll. 143, 144, the memory of *Te Deums* heard in the nave of Italian churches before or after the exile. It was, we may note, always sung at Matins, and in Dante's mind would be associated with the conversion of Augustine, who, alone or with Ambrose, was its traditional author (*D. C. A.* ii. 1950).

² The "evil lust" is that which is turned away from God as the true Supreme Good, and fixed on the seeming good of the world. In most men that lust is dominant, and therefore it is true of the gate of penitence that "few there be that find it." See note on C. ix. 136.

⁵ The meaning of C. ix. 131 is not forgotten. Probably Lot's wife and Orpheus mingled in Dante's memory as warning instances.

⁷ The undulation is not that of actual motion, but the winding sinuosity of the narrow, almost zigzag path. We have, as in C. iii. 49, a reminiscence of Alpine travel, possibly, as suggested by Mr. Douglas Freshfield, an

"Here must some little art with us be found," 10
 Then said my Leader, "that we take the side
 Now here, now there, where the road windeth round."
 Our footsteps thus with slower speed were plied,
 So that the waned orb of the moon had gone
 Within its lowly couch again to hide, 15
 Ere through that needle's eye our way we won ;
 But when we reached the open and were free,
 Where the mount backward piles itself in one,
 I, worn and weary,—doubting, I and he
 About our way,—we then to halt were fain 20
 On a broad ledge more lone than deserts be ;
 And from the rim which doth the void contain,
 On to the foot of that bank's soaring height,
 Three human forms the measure would attain ;
 And far as eye of mine could wing its flight, 25
 Now on the right flank, now upon the left,
 The same this cornice seemed still to my sight.
 By not one step had we our station left
 When I the bank that went around did see,
 Which had us of all power to mount bereft, 30

expert in such matters, of travels in the Adige valley, among "limestone crags with dolomite characteristics." They must be climbed by long slopes of broken unstable boulders, or by chimneys which constantly bend or shift. What Dante fixes on is their frangibility. They are treacherous, and the climber must test, before he trusts, each hand-hold (Gilbert's *Landscape in Art*, p. 36; *Alpine Journal*, vol. xi. p. 36). The use of the "needle's eye" by way of description in l. 16 determines, if there had been any doubt, its symbolical significance (*Matt.* xix. 24 ; *Mark* x. 25 ; *Luc.* xvii. 25). Students will remember that that name was applied also to the narrow gateway of an Eastern city, through which no beast of burden could pass.

¹⁹ Another vivid recollection of dolomite experiences. To be weary, and not to know the way, what was this but a parable of the first stages of the penitent's progress. From the narrow path they emerge upon an even surface, a cornice, as it were, about eighteen feet in width. The term, now familiar to all Riviera travellers, is applied constantly to the terraces of the Mountain (*C.* xi. 29, xiii. 4, xvii. 131, *et al.*). Along its rock-wall are seen the sculptures in relief, such as Dante may have seen in the cathedrals of Italy or France, and which he describes, as with a prophetic idealism of the possibilities of that art, as furnishing, no less than painting, the *Biblia pauperum* for those who could read no other. It is, perhaps, significant, on the *segniis irritant animos* principle, that the penitent's instruction begins with these object-lessons.

Of marble white, and so adorned to be
 With sculptures that not Polyclete alone,
 But Nature's self had owned its victory.
 The angel who to earth the news made known
 Of peace that man had wept for many a year, 35
 And Heaven long barred and closed had open thrown,
 Before us stood in sculptured form so clear,
 In attitude that sweetest thought betrayed ;
 That he no speechless image did appear.
 One could have sworn that he his *Ave* said, 0
 For there too in clear imaged form was She
 Who turned the key that high love open laid ;
 And on her mien, as written, one might see
 " *Ecce Ancilla Dei*," full as plain
 As figures that in wax imprinted be. 4
 " Let not one spot thy mind so long detain,"
 Said my sweet Master, who upon that side
 Had me which doth in man the heart contain.
 Wherefore I turned my gaze, and so descried,
 In rear of Mary, there towards my right, 50
 Where he stood who was acting as my Guide,
 Another tale engraved on that rock's height.
 Wherefore, past Virgil crossing, near I drew,
 Till full and clear it stood before my sight.

³² Polycletus, the Greek sculptor (*A.* B.C. 480), specially famous for a colossal statue of Juno in the Temple of Argos. Dante had probably read of him in Pliny (*N. H.* xxxiv. 8). A characteristic story is told of him which may have seemed to him a commentary on the *Lascia dir le genti* of C. v. 13. He made one statue entirely by himself. Another, of the same subject, as amateur critics advised. He exhibited the first, and all admired it ; while the critics themselves abused and despised the second (*Ælian.* v. ; *H.* xiv. 8). The thought that art could excel Nature indicates the idealism of the poet who was also an artist.

³⁴ We are in the region where the proud are cleansed, and the subjects chosen are object-lessons in humility ; the Annunciation, the *Ecce Ancilla Dei*, expressed, like the *Ave* of the angel, in attitude (*Luke* i. 28-38), being taken as the utterance of a supreme submission to the Divine Will.

⁶² The scene represented is the transport of the ark from the house of Obed-edom, the special point in it being the humility of David as contrasted with the pride of Michal (2 *Sam.* vi. 20-23). There is, however, in l. 57, a side-glance at the history of Uzzah (2 *Sam.* vi. 7), as a warning against all intrusion into an office not one's own, against all usurped authority, whether

There in the marble's self there sculptured grew 55
 The car and kine that bare the holy chest,
 Which o'er tasks self-assumed its terrors threw.
 In front appeared a crowd that onward pressed,
 In seven full choirs, who sense and sense made foes ;
 This "Yes, they sing," and that did "No" attest. 60
 So too the smoke that from the incense rose,
 Which there was imaged, made the nose and eyes
 Conflict, and so to "No" and "Yes" dispose.
 Before the blessed ark in humble guise
 The Psalmist went, and with his loins girt, leapt, 65
 More than a king, and less, before mine eyes.
 And on the other side, her station kept
 At palace window, Michal on him gazed,
 Like woman who for scorn and shame has wept.
 From where I stood my feet I forward raised 70
 To scan more near another history,
 Which behind Michal in its whiteness blazed.
 There was wrought out the glory great and high
 Of that great Prince of Rome whose excellence
 Moved Gregory to his great victory, 75
 (To Trajan, Emperor, I this praise dispense)
 And a poor widow stood beside his rein
 Bowed down by many a tear and grief intense :
 And round about him, seemed it thronged by train
 Of mounted knights, and eagles all in gold, 80
 In the wind fluttering, glittered clear and plain:

on the part of pope or emperor or king. Comp. the Epist. to the Italian Cardinals, i.

⁵⁹ The "seven choirs" of Levites, which do not appear in the A. V. or Hebrew, are taken from the *Vulg.* of 2 *Sam.* vi. 12, which follows the LXX. and agrees with Joseph (*Ant.* vii. 4). Lines 60-63 are noteworthy as embodying the idea of the highest possibilities of art.

⁷⁵ The story of Trajan and the widow is told by Dio Cassius (ix. 5), that of Gregory in connection with it by Joann. Diaconus (*Vita Greg.* iv. 44). It is quoted by Aquinas as from Joann. Damascenus (*Summ.* iii., *Suppl.* 79, 5), occurs in the *Gesta Roman.* f. 87, and was among the most popular of mediæval legends. It is quoted, e.g., in *Piers Plowman*, 6854-90. Primarily, of course, it occupies a place here as an example of humility in one who stood at the highest point of earthly greatness, but the reference to it

It seemed among them that sad woman told
 Her tale, "My Lord, let me thy vengeance call
 For my son's death, that turns my heart's blood cold."
 And he replied: "Wait thou till it befall 85
 That I return ;" and she, "Nay, good my Lord,"
 Answered, as one with grief impatient all,
 "If thou return not." . . . "Who succeeds," his word
 So ran, "will do it for thee." She : "The good
 Of others will not help, thine own deferred." 90
 Then he: "Now rest thou in more cheerful mood;
 I, ere I stir, at once the right will do;
 So justice wills; me pity hath subdued."
 He to whose vision nothing comes as new
 Wrought by his skill this language visible, 95
 Most strange to us, for here nought like we view.
 And while with great delight my glances fell
 On these fair emblems of humility,
 That for their Maker's sake were dear as well,
 "See on this side (with few steps pass they by)," 100
 Murmured the Poet, "people manifold:
 These will lead us to stairs that rise on high."
 Mine eyes, which still were eager to behold,
 And see the strange new things that they desire,
 Were then not slack to turn as I was told. 105

in *Par.* xx. 44, 106, seems to show that it was a tale that Dante loved to dwell on as an instance of the Divine compassion flowing out beyond its ordinary limitations.

⁹⁴ The poet seems to have remembered that, though an ideally perfect sculpture might express a given emotion as adequately as language, it was scarcely possible that it should represent a dialogue, and therefore ascribes it to the Supreme Divine Artist, who could make even speech visible as well as audible, and so create a "new thing" for the souls of men to wonder at.

¹⁰¹ We note the significance of the fact that those who have sought the highest places on earth occupy the lowest circle of the Mount of Purification before they hear the call which bids them go up higher.

¹⁰⁴ As in *C.* ix. 65, xxiv. 52, we have an instance of self-analysis, and Dante recognises the eager desire to investigate new phenomena as eminently characteristic of his own nature. But for himself and for his readers there is yet another thought. The spectacle of the sufferings that are appointed as the discipline of the evil which is not incurable ought not to deter men from seeking that discipline. They are to look beyond them to what follows (*Rom.* viii. 18), to the judgment of the great Day, beyond which, at the

I wish not, Reader, that thou should'st retire
 From thy good purpose when thou art made sure
 How God doth payment of thy debt require.
 Heed not the form of pain that sins procure;
 Think of what follows; think if worst should be, 110
 Beyond the Judgment it shall not endure.
 Then I began: "O Master, what I see
 Towards us moving, persons do not seem;
 Yet what I know not; clear sight faileth me."
 And he to me: "The grievous lot, I deem, 115
 Of this their torture bows them to the ground;
 So that at first mine eyes sought clearer gleam.
 But fix thy gaze; so may such search profound
 Reveal what cometh there beneath yon stones;
 There canst thou see by what weight each is
 bound." 120
 O ye proud Christians, sad and weary ones,
 Who, weakened in the vision of your mind,
 Place your blind trust in course that backward runs!
 Perceive ye not we are of worm-like kind,
 Born to bring forth the angel butterfly, 125
 That soars to Judgment, and no screen doth find?
 Why doth your soul lift up itself on high?
 Ye are as insects yet but half complete,
 As worms in whom their growth fails utterly.

worst, they cannot pass (*Matt.* xxv. 34, 41). The discipline here, as throughout, is specially appropriate to the sin. Those who had lifted themselves up in pride are constrained to an enforced humility of attitude, and through that pass to lowliness of mind.

¹²⁰ The readings vary: *Nicchia*=laments, and *picchia*=beats, *i.e.*, smites on his breast.

¹²⁴ The similitude embraces both the littleness and the greatness of man's nature. Man is but as a worm (*Job* xxv. 6; *Ps.* xxii. 7; *Isai.* xli. 14), but within the worm there is hidden the "angelic butterfly" of the soul, the *Psyche* of which the body is the sheath, and which must one day meet, without defence or screen, the severity of the Divine Judge. The thought may have been suggested by the appearance in ancient monuments of the butterfly as the symbol of the soul, known in Greek by the self-same name (*Müller, Arch. d. Kunst.* pp. 391-399).

¹²⁸ Dante's use of the plural *entomata*, instead of *entoma*, for "insects," is a fair measure of his knowledge of Greek. Through lexicons, or other-

As to give roof or ceiling bearing meet,
 As corbel fixed, a form is often seen,
 Of which the knees up-thrust the bosom meet,
 And by its pain untrue gives true pain keen
 To him who on it looks, so these I saw,
 With good heed gazing on their act and mien. 130
 True, their cramped limbs did each to other draw,
 As they upon their back bore more or less,
 And he who most of patience owned the law
 "I can no more," seemed crying in distress. 125

CANTO XI

*The Lord's Prayer—The Proud—Oderisi of Agubbio—
 Provenzan Salviani and Others*

"OUR Father, Thou who dwellest in the Heaven,
 Not bound by space, but by love more intense,
 Which Thou unto Thy primal works hast given,

wise, he had met with the word *entoma*, and took it for a neuter singular, forming its plural after the pattern of "*dogmata*."

¹³⁰ The description may have been suggested by the grotesque corbels and gargoyles of almost any mediæval cathedral. Ampère (p. 257) notes the fact that caryatides appear as supporting the roof of the *Loggia dei Lanzi* at Florence; but that is, if I mistake not, of later date.

¹³⁸ The words bring before us the extremest limit of endurance. The suffering varied according to the guilt of the sufferers, but where it was most acute and borne with supremest patience (*pazienza* seems to unite both meanings), act and look bore witness that the soul could bear no more. That was the lesson of extreme humiliation to be learnt by those who in their lifetime had thought that there was no limit to their pride.

¹ The paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer with which the Canto opens comes with a special significance as part of the discipline of the proud. They have to become as little children (*Matt.* xviii. 3), and to learn their *Pater-noster* once again in all the fulness of its meaning. On two other grounds also it claims a special notice—(1) in the contrast between its exceeding beauty and the jejune-ness of the apocryphal paraphrase which has been ascribed to Dante (given in vol. ii.); (2) as showing how the prayer was interpreted by mediæval theologians, and with what thoughts Dante himself prayed it.

² The thought was at once biblical (1 *K.* viii. 27) and scholastic (Aquinas. *Summ.* i. 2, 102, 4). Dante returns to it in *Par.* xiv. 30. The words that follow are meant to reconcile the apparent localisation implied in the words "which art in Heaven" with the metaphysical conception of the Infinite

Praised be Thy Name and Thine omnipotence
 By every creature, as 'tis meet and right 5
 To render thanks to Thy sweet effluence.
 Upon us may Thy kingdom's peace alight,
 To which we cannot of ourselves arise,
 Unless it come, with all our reason's might.
 As of their will Thine angels sacrifice 10
 Make to Thee, while their lips 'Hosanna' say,
 So may men offer all their will's device!
 Our daily manna give to us to-day,
 Without which whoso through this desert drear
 Journeys, goes back, though pressing on his way: 15
 And as the trespass we from others bear
 We forgive each, so, Lord, do Thou forgive
 Of bounty, nor to count our merits care.

and Omnipresent. God is there, in the empyrean sphere of perfect peace, not by local limitation, but because His love is manifested most in the heavens, which, with the angels as their inhabitants, are the "first works" of His creative power.

⁶ The "effluence" (Ital. *vapore*, from the description of Wisdom in the *Vulg. of Wisd.* vii, 25, as the "*vapor virtutis Dei*") is that of the Love manifested in creation; LXX. gives *ἀρμαίς*.

⁷ The insertion of "peace" is eminently characteristic. The Epistle which bears the name of Fra Ilario is now commonly rejected as spurious, but in its statement that, when Dante was questioned at the monastery of Il Corvo as to what he sought, his answer was "Peace, peace," there is probably the echo of a fact. Here he lays stress on the fact that it must "*come*" to men; that no intellect, however lofty, can otherwise attain to it.

¹⁰ The Heaven in which the will of God is done is not the material heaven in which that will reigns as law, but that of the angelic orders. As spiritual beings, their obedience is the obedience of will, and in their hosannas of praise and their ministries they ever offer up the sacrifice of a will perfectly at one with God's; and this, though in men the sacrifice may not be, even in the holiest, without some sense of struggle ("Not as I will, but as Thou wilt," *Matt.* xxvi. 39). is the pattern to which we pray to be conformed.

¹³ With all the deeper and devouter thinkers of Christianity, Dante interprets the "daily bread," not of "common food," but of the spiritual "manna," the bread that "cometh down from Heaven" (*John* vi. 50). Only in that sense, indeed, could the words have any meaning as spoken by the souls in Purgatory. The "*panem supersubstantialem*" of the *Vulg.* of *Matt.* vi. 11 was probably in his mind, striking the keynote of his interpretation. The thought of the "manna" naturally suggests the "wilderness" of l. 14. Without the strength for progress which that bread gives our motion is necessarily retrograde. *Comp.* 1 *Kings* xix. 7.

¹⁸ We are to forgive those who wrong us without thinking of their merits. Only on that ground can we pray that God will not take our merits as the measure of His pardon.

Our virtue, which so soon doth harm receive,
 Put not to peril with our ancient foe, 20
 But from his evil sting deliverance give.
 This final prayer, dear Lord, from us doth flow,
 Not for ourselves, for we no longer need,
 But for their sakes whom we have left below." 25
 So praying for themselves and us 'God speed!' 25
 Those souls went on their way beneath their
 weight,
 As oft in dreams such evil fancies breed;
 Round still and round, in anguish disparate,
 And wearied all, along the bank they wound,
 Purging the darkness thick of Earth's estate. 30
 If there for us such pleadings aye abound,
 What here for them may those or do or say,
 In whom the blest root of good-will is found?
 Well may we help them wash those stains away,
 Which they bore hence, that so, made clean and 35
 free, 35
 Up to yon starry sphere they take their way.

²⁰ The paraphrase has the interest of showing that Dante followed the Schoolmen and Fathers—and they were many—who saw in the Greek of the Lord's Prayer, as the "*Revised Version*" has done, the meaning "Deliver us from the Evil One."

²² The souls that were waiting for admission to Purgatory were still subject to temptations (C. viii. 98). Once within the gates and the Tempter ceases to have any power to hurt them. For them the last clause is an intercession for those left on earth. In all that follows, as in what goes before, we have to remember that the sin of pride was that which Dante recognised as his own besetting temptation (l. 73, C. xiii. 136). He had found in the Lord's Prayer that which was the most effective charm against it.

²⁷ The actual burdens of life were too feeble for the comparison which Dante sought, and he has to fall back upon what has been called the *incubus*, the nightmare sense of a crushing and overwhelming weight, more poetically, in German, the *Alpdrücken*, which men feel in dreams.

³⁰ The thought is an echo of Aug. in *Ps. vi.*, "*Videte fumum superbiæ similem, ascendentem, tumescentem, vanescentem.*"

³¹ The thought expressed is that of mediæval theology. Not only the souls in Paradise, but those in Purgatory, pray for those they love on earth. How much more should those on earth, who can not only pray, but offer the sacrifice of the altar and their deeds of mercy as prevailing pleas, be eager to intercede for them? (Aquinas. *Summ. P. iii., Suppl. 76, 9.*)

"Ah, so may justice soon and charity
 Disburden you, that ye with wings may move
 That shall uplift you where ye seek to be!
 Show us which path towards the stairs will prove 40
 The shortest way; if there be more than one,
 Then that which slopes less steeply from above:
 For he who comes with me is nigh undone
 By Adam's flesh, wherewith he stands arrayed,
 And 'gainst his will, with laggard steps goes 45
 on."

The words that were to this in answer said,
 Which he had spoken whom I came behind,
 The quarter whence they came but half displayed,
 But this was said: "Ye on the right shall find,
 If ye come with us, pass accessible, 50
 Where living man his way may safely wind;
 And if this stone were not a hindrance fell,
 Which on me lies to tame my stiff neck's pride,
 And me to keep my face down doth compel,
 Him, who yet liveth and his name doth hide, 55
 I fain would see,—perchance, a well-known face,—
 Whose heart would pity for my woes provide.
 A Latin was I, of great Tuscan race,
 Guglielm' Aldobrandeschi called me son;
 I know not if his name your memory trace. 60

³⁷ Virgil, representing human wisdom, has no adequate experience of the processes of spiritual purification, and has to apply to those who have been taught by experience, which, of all the ways of conquering pride, is the least difficult for human weakness. As the sequel shows, that way is found in discerning the consequence of that sin as seen in others, and so learning partly by example, partly by sympathy.

⁵⁸ The first speaker is Umberto Aldobrandeschi, Count of Santafore (C. vi. 111), in the Maremma of the Siennese territory. The family were Ghibellines, took part with Henry VII., and fought under Uguccione della Faggiuola at the battle of Montecatini (*Vill.* vi. 71, ix. 47). Here the special sin was the pride of ancestry. For a fuller treatment of that vice, see *Conv.* iv. and the *Canz.* which it expands. The Counts of Santafore were in perpetual conflict with Sienna on questions of jurisdiction. The Siennese invaded the castle of Campagnatico, and Umberto was killed in a sortie, or, according to another account, murdered in his bed by assassins who had been hired by the Siennese authorities (*Murat.* xv. 28).

My ancient blood and brave deeds nobly done
 By my forefathers, me so haughty made,
 That I forgot our Mother is but one,
 And towards all men such proud scorn displayed, 65
 I died through it, as all Siennese know,
 And every child in Campagnatic glade.
 Omberto I ; nor did that pride work woe
 To me alone, but all my kindred too
 Into sore trouble it had power to throw.
 And here this weight must needs my pride subdue 70
 So long, until that God be satisfied,
 Here 'mong the dead, since life failed that to do."
 I, as I listened, bent, my face to hide,
 And one of them, not he who to us spake,
 Writhed 'neath the weight to which his limbs were
 tied ; 75
 He saw me, knew me ; from his lips there brake,
 As he did strain his eager gaze, a cry,
 While I, all bent, with them my way did take.
 "Art thou not Oderisi ?" then said I,
 "The pride of Gubbio, glory of that art 80
 In Paris known as limner's mystery ?"
 "Brother," said he, "more pleasure gives the chart
 Which Franco of Bologna now doth paint :
 His now is all the honour, mine but part ;

⁷³ The attitude is not merely that of attention, but expresses the poet's consciousness that he himself was a sharer in the sin. Of that pride of ancestry, mingled with the feeling that it was a weakness, we find traces even in *Par.* xvi. 1-3.

⁷⁹ The next speaker illustrates another form of pride, that of art, and in so doing brings before us the *Origines* of the earlier renaissance. Oderisi of Agubbio (*A. circ.* 1270-90), in the duchy of Urbino, was famous as a painter of miniatures in MS. ornamentations at Bologna and Rome, where he worked for the Pope, and, according to one account, was the teacher of Cimabue at Florence. In the mention of "illuminating," as the special term used at Paris (the Italian verb was *miniare*, from *minium* = a red pigment ; hence also "miniature") we have probably another reminiscence of Dante's residence in that city (*Par.* x. 136). *Phil.* quotes from the records of the Inquisition at Carcasson in 1308 as the earliest instance of the Lat. "*illuminatum*" in this sense. Dante, with the philological tastes shown in *V. E.* i. 9, 10, notes the appearance of a new word. I use the word "limner" as derived from *illuminare*.

My courteous praise would have been far more faint ⁸⁵
 While I was living, so by longings made
 For eminence, on which my heart was bent.
 Of that foul pride the forfeit here is paid ;
 Yet had I not attained this place and hour,
 Save that, with power to sin, to God I prayed. ⁹⁰
 Oh, empty glory of all human power,
 How little green doth on its height endure,
 Save when dull times that follow darkly lour !
 Once Cimabue seemed to hold full sure
 His own 'gainst all in art : now Giotto bears ⁹⁵
 The palm, and this man's fame doth that obscure.

⁸³ Franco of Bologna was a painter in the same Byzantine style as Oderisi, but was held to have improved on his predecessor. A picture now in the Palazzo Ercolani of Bologna is ascribed to him, but its authenticity has been questioned (Kugler, *Kunst Gesch.* 5th. ed. ii. 193, Barlow (p. 216).

⁹⁰ "With power to sin," *i.e.*, while still living. If there had been no such power, there could have been no freedom of the will, and therefore no true conversion.

⁹¹ Here, also, Dante recognised his own likeness. He had the scholar's, the artist's pride, as well as that of birth.

⁹³ The thought shows a singular insight into the conditions of human fame as far as art is concerned. In a progressive age each artist and poet eclipses his predecessor. It is only in a period of decadence that men look back upon the past and say that "there were giants in those days."

⁹⁴ Giovanni Cimabue of Florence (*b. circ.* 1240, *d.* 1302). Pictures by him are to be seen, as they were probably seen by Dante, in the churches of S. Maria Novella and Santa Croce at Florence, and in the Upper Church of Assisi, exhibiting the first traces of liberation from the traditional routine of Byzantine art and the conventionalities of that of the illuminators. The delight of the Florentines at the first of these showed itself in a solemn procession of exuberant joy, which was believed to have made the quarter in which the painter lived known to all future time as the Borgo Allegri. Vasari says that there was in his day an epitaph on Cimabue in the Duomo of Florence presenting a striking parallelism with Dante—

*Credidit ut Cimabos picturæ castra tenere,
 Sic tenuit vivus, nunc tenet astra poli.*—Linds. i. 340-345.

But, as the date is doubtful, it is uncertain which is an echo of the other.

⁹⁵ The fact that Giotto was in the inner circle of Dante's friends gives a special interest to this mention of his name. Born in 1276 (Vas., but others name 1265), as the son of Bondone of Vespignano near Florence, he began to show his powers of art at the age of ten, while keeping his father's flock. Cimabue, struck by seeing a picture of a sheep which he had drawn upon a stone, took him as his pupil, and soon, as Dante says, he excelled his master. Dante, though older, may have been his fellow pupil, and learnt to paint angels (*V. N. c.* 35) as he painted them. At any rate, his

So too one Guido from the other tears

The praise of speech, and one doth live, perchance,
Who to drive both from out their nest prepares.

The world's best fame no higher doth advance 100

Than breath of wind, whose fickle gusts deceive,
And changing side, leaves name to change and chance.

What greater glory thine, if age bereave

Thee of thy flesh, than if thou then hadst died,

Ere thou thy infant prattling erst didst leave, 105

work connects itself with the poet's life. In the Bargello of Florence, once the Chapel of the Podestà Palace, there is the picture, discovered under many coatings of whitewash in 1840, in which there are portraits of Dante, Brunetto Latini, and Corso Donati. Other pictures are seen in the Santa Croce and the Church del Carmine. In the Church of Assisi he completed the series which had been begun by Cimabue, and these include notably (1) the Marriage of S. Francis with Poverty, of which Dante tells in *Par.* xi., and (2) the gathering of the Saint's disciples, among whom, as said in the note on *H.* xvi. 106, he has introduced his poet-friend. In the series of pictures in the Arena Chapel at Padua, he is said to have been assisted by that friend's counsels. Other works were executed for Boniface VIII., the portrait of the Pope in St John Lateran, and the *Navicella* in St. Peter's (probably when Dante was with him in Rome in the year of Jubilee, 1300), and Clement V. at Avignon; and as an architect he left the Campanile at Florence as a perpetual inheritance.

⁹⁷ The earlier of the two Guidos has been commonly identified with G. Guinicelli of Bologna (*d.* 1216), of whom Dante speaks as his father in poetry (*C.* xxvi. 97), noblest and greatest among the early poets of Italy (*Conv.* iv. 20; *V. E.* i. 15); the later with G. Cavalcante, the poet's personal friend (*H.* x. 58), who was among the men of letters to whom he had addressed the first sonnet of the *V. N.*, to whom, indeed, the whole book was dedicated. Other names, such as Guido della Colonna (*fl. circ.* 1250) and Guittone of Arezzo (*C.* xxiv. 86, xxvi. 124), have been suggested, but on grounds that are hardly strong enough to prevail against the general *consensus* of commentators. It is scarcely probable that Dante would have used the name Guido for one whom he elsewhere (as above) calls Guittone.

⁹⁸ Are the words, like those of *H.* iv. 102, xxv. 94-97, *Par.* xvii. 118, the utterance of a conscious estimate by Dante of his own powers? Was he, that is, tempted to a boastful pride in the very act of describing its punishment? It may be so; but if so, it is as with a certain grave irony which claims only the passing glory of an idle day, and anticipates only, for himself as for others, the utter oblivion which time ultimately brings to all that belongs to the fashion of the world. It is quite as probable, however, that the words may have been written simply as a wide generalisation without any reference to himself. *Comp.* *C.* xxvi. 98.

¹⁰³ The original gives *pappo* and *dindi* as the infantile equivalents for *pane* and *denari*. The thought is, of course, that the night of forgetfulness falls alike on the long life crowned with honours and on that cut short in merest childhood. Within a thousand years, *a fortiori* in that eternity in which a thousand years are but as the twinkling of an eye, all will alike be forgotten. The sphere of l. 108 is that of the fixed stars, revolving in 30,000 years.

When thousand years have passed? Yet that, beside
 The eternal, is as twinkle of an eye
 To sphere that slowest turns where Heaven spreads
 wide.

Of him who treads before me tardily
 His onward way, all Tuscany did ring; 110
 Now scarce a whisper 'neath Siena's sky
 Is heard, where he was lord, when fate did bring
 Rout on the rage of Florence, then as high
 As now she is in whoredom grovelling.
 Your high repute, as bloom of grass, doth fly, 115
 Which comes and goes, and he doth mar its grace
 Through whom from earth it burgeons verdantly."
 And I to him: "Thy words in my heart trace
 Lessons that humble, and bring low my pride;
 But who is he that in thy speech had place?" 120
 "Salvani Provenzano," he replied,
 "And he is here, because with pride unblest
 He sought to rule o'er all Siena wide.
 Thus is he gone, and wandering knows no rest,
 Since his death hour; such forfeit here is paid 125
 By him who there in daring has transgressed."

109 As an instance of the transitoriness of fame, Dante selects Provenzan Salvani, of whom, but for this mention of him, Italy and the world would have known scarcely anything. Once he had been chief among the Ghibellines, proud and haughty, Governor of Siena when the Florentines were defeated at Montaperti. In 1269, when the Florentines in their turn defeated the Siennese, he was taken and beheaded (*Vill.* vii. 31; *Malisp.* c. 202).

112 The poet's judgment on the recent history of his city is curiously mixed. In the predominance of the Guelphs he saw a time of madness, but even that was a time of greatness as compared with the debasement to which she had been reduced by the factions of later years.

116 The sun to which the green grass owes its life dries it up. Time, which gives birth to fame, is fatal to its endurance.

118 We note once again the tone of penitent confession which militates against the assumption that l. 98 is to be interpreted as a prophecy of the poet's own fame.

122 The question rises out of Belacqua's statement in C. iv. 127-135, and implies that Salvani had delayed his repentance to the time of death, and had not been helped by the prayers of others. How then had he come to the first circle of the Mountain when barely thirty years had passed?

And if each soul remain below," I said,
 "Who waits till life's last verge ere he repent,
 Nor may his upward journey yet be made
 Unless true prayers their gracious help have lent, 130
 Until he pass the time he lived on earth,
 By what great bounty was he hither sent?"
 "He, when he lived in state of loftiest worth,
 Of his free will, in fair Siena's plain,
 Stood forth, nor let the sense of shame have birth, 135
 And there, to free his dear friend from the pain,
 Which wore his life in Charles's prison drear,
 So acted that he trembled in each vein;
 No more I'll say, and know I speak not clear,
 But those thy fellows soon will thee apprise, 140
 So that to thee full plain it shall appear:
 This deed released him from those boundaries."

¹³³ The answer to the question is found in the fact that in the closing years of his life Salvani had made a great act of humiliation, which, in strict accordance with mediæval theology, was accepted as a satisfaction. His friend, Vinca or Vinca, who had fought under Conradin at Tagliacozzo (*H.* xxviii. 17), had been taken prisoner by Charles of Anjou, who demanded a ransom of ten thousand florins. Salvani, on hearing this, having no money of his own, took his place in the Campo, or Hippodrome, of Siena, and begged money for the purpose from all who passed by till he obtained the sum required. Charity, in this case, had covered a multitude of sins.

¹³⁹ The words, like the memorable lines of *Par.* xvii. 58-60, lay bare one of the keenest wounds of Dante's life. He knew that "trembling in every vein," that sense of humiliation which attended the act of asking alms, not as the member of a religious order, but as a personal favour (comp. also *Conv.* i. 3), and he had found no friend like Salvani to relieve him of his burden.

*The Sculptures on the Pavement—The Angel of the Second
Circle—The First Perished*

WITH even pace, like oxen at the plough,
 I went with that soul in his sore distress,
 As long as my sweet Tutor would allow;
 But when he said, "Leave him, and onward press;
 For here 'tis good our barque, with sail and oar,"
 To push with all the strength which we possess,"
 Then, as when men move onward, I once more
 Rose up in body, though my thoughts were still
 Downcast and humble, as they were before.
 I had moved on, and followed with good will
 The steps of my dear Master, and we twain
 Showed how alert we were to climb the hill,
 When he said to me, "Look thou down again;
 Good will it be, to speed thee on thy way,
 To see what bed doth now thy feet sustain."

¹ The comparison presents so striking a parallelism to Homer (*Il.* xiii. 704), that, if we had had evidence that Dante had read the *Iliad*, we should have been justified in treating it as a deliberate reproduction. What is indicated is, that the poet accepts the discipline of humility, and becomes a sharer in bearing Oderisi's burden.

³ The word "tutor" or "pædagogus" is probably chosen with a special reference to the *Vulg.* of Gal. iii. 24. Dante had found in Virgil a "school-master" (I give the familiar English because familiar) "leading him to Christ."

⁴ The lesson thus enforced is in accordance with that of all masters of the spiritual life. Each must advance as rapidly as he can. The pilgrim could not really lighten the burden of his fellow sufferer, and a prolongation of outward sympathy might delay his own progress. What was needed, and what had been actually gained, was humility of soul, not the bodily act, which was but its outward symbol.

¹⁵⁻²⁴ The sculptures which represented patterns of humility had been upright, fixed on the rock-wall. Those which represent the punishment of pride are appropriately, like monumental slabs placed upon the ground, so that men may tread on them. Most of the instances—Biblical and classical examples being, as usual, intermingled—tell their own tale. For the primal glory of Lucifer see *H.* xxxiv. 18; for Briareus, *H.* xxxi. 98. Thymbræus (the guardian deity of Thymbra in the Troad) stands, as in *Æn.* iii. 85, *Georg.* iv. 323, for Apollo. For the story of Niobe, who boasted against Latona of her beauty, her ancestry, her numerous offspring, see *Met.* vi. 180-301. The famous Niobe sculpture, it may be noted, was not known to Dante, having been discovered at Rome in 1583. For that of Arachne, who challenged Minerva to a trial of skill in embroidery and was changed into a spider, see *Met.* vi. 30-145; for that of Alcæon, the son of Amphiaræus

As oft, that they in memory may stay,
 Over the buried dead their tombs on earth
 What they aforetime were, in form portray,
 Whence oftentimes to our weeping comes new birth,
 Through the sharp sting of poignant memory, 20
 Which spurs on none but souls of loving worth;
 So saw I there, but clearer to the eye,
 According to the Artist's skill designed,
 Whate'er of path-rim up the mount did lie.
 There I saw him, whom we created find 25
 Noblest of creatures, falling down from heaven,
 On one side, as though lightning flash had shined:
 I saw Briareus, by the sharp dart riven
 Celestial, lie upon the other side,
 And in cold death his weight to earth was driven. 30
 Thymbræus, Pallas, Mars, I saw beside,
 Armed as of yore around their sire divine,
 Gaze on the limbs of giants far and wide :
 At foot of his great work these eyes of mine
 Saw Nimrod dazed, and looking on the host 35
 Whose pride in Shinar did with his combine :
 And thee too, Niobe, on that drear coast
 I saw depicted, with thy dolorous eyes,
 With children seven and seven on each side lost !
 There, on thine own sword fallen, thy form lies, 40
 O Saul ! as when in death on Gilboa's height,
 That never more knew rain nor dewy skies !
 O mad Arachne, thou didst meet my sight,
 Half spider now, sad mid the tangled rows
 Of that famed work which wrought thine evil
 plight ! 45

(*H.* xx. 34), and Eriphyle, who slew his mother after learning that she had received a necklace from Polynices as the price of her treachery in disclosing her husband's hiding-place, when he, knowing that the attack of the Seven against Thebes would end fatally for him, sought to conceal himself and so escape taking part in it (*Stat. Theb.* ii. 272 ; *Met.* ix. 407) ; for Tomyris, Queen of the Scythians, who uttered the words quoted as she cast the head of Cyrus into a vessel filled with blood (*Herod.* i. 291) ; for Holofernes

O Rehoboam, there thy likeness shows
 No threatening aspect, but, o'ercome with dread,
 A chariot bears thee, e'er pursued by foes.
 There the hard pavement that our feet did tread
 Showed how Alcmaeon made his mother know 50
 How dear the luckless gauds for which she bled.
 'Twas shown how traitorous sons themselves did
 throw
 Upon Sennacherib, who in worship stood,
 And left him there, as he in death lay low;
 It showed the carnage and the example crude 55
 In Tomyris, when she to Cyrus said,
 "For blood thou thirsted'st, thee I glut with
 blood."
 There too it showed how those Assyrians fled,
 In foul defeat, when Holofernes fell,
 And all the remnant in that slaughter dread. 60
 In dust and caves I saw Troy's citadel;
 O Ilion, how humbled did appear
 Thy form and features there ensculptured well!
 What master of the brush and style was there,
 Who traced out every lineament and mien 65
 Which subtlest genius, wondering, would revere?
 Alive the living, dead the dead were seen:
 Who sees the truth no better sees than I
 Saw, while my gaze towards the ground did lean.
 Now wax ye proud, and walk with haughty eye, 70
 Ye sons of Eve, and never bend your head,
 So as to see how ill your path doth lie.

(*Judith* xiv. 4-16). Troy (l. 61) was the city, Ilion the citadel or rock-fortress. *Faur.* (i. 233) suggests that Can Grande's picture-gallery in Verona may have furnished hints for the suggestive lists of subjects.

⁶⁴ The two words are used with artistic precision. The *stylus* was a metal instrument which traced the outlines of the *intaglio*, afterwards filled in with colour by the brush. Here, as in C. x. 37, 60, we have the artist's anticipation of a perfect development of art, which should make it as the living counterpart of Nature.

⁷⁰ The rest of the induction is embodied in the keen incisive irony which was Dante's favourite weapon.

O'er more than half the hill had passed our tread,
 And more by far the Sun his course had spent
 Than we with mind engrossed had reckonèd, 75
 When he who walked before me all intent,
 Began : " Now lift thy head ; no time indeed
 Have we to go ; on meditation bent.
 See there an angel who doth quicker speed
 To come towards us ; see, how now doth turn 80
 The day's sixth handmaid, from her service
 freed.
 Due reverence let thine acts and features learn,
 That it may please him upward us to guide:
 Think this day's brightness never will return."
 Well knew I now that counsel oft applied 85
 To lose no time : in matter such as this
 His words for me no meaning dark could hide.
 Then came to us that Being bright with bliss
 Arrayed in white, a glory in his face
 Tremulous as a star at daybreak is. 90
 He oped his arms, he oped his wings in space,
 And said, " Come hither, lo ! the steps are
 near;
 With nimble feet ye now may mount apace.
 But few are they who this my summons hear.
 O race of mortals, born on high to soar, 95
 Why fall ye down before a little air ? "

⁸¹ The sixth handmaiden of the day is the sixth hour, *i.e.*, noon was already passed. Two hours and a half had been spent in the region of the proud.

⁸⁶ It is not without interest to note that the Roman service for the sixth hour contains a section of *Ps. cxix.*, which includes the words "*Tempus faciendi, Domine . . . ad omnia mandata tua dirigebar* (vv. 126, 128).

⁸⁸ The angel is the guardian of the second circle and the steep rock-path that leads to it. The special description seems taken from *Matt. xxviii. 3, Mark xvi. 5.*

⁹⁴ Commentators are divided on the question whether the words that follow are to be taken as forming part of the address of the angel or as the poet's reflection thereon. The "little wind" which hinders most men from obeying the heavenly call is the "*aura popularis*," the breath of fame (*C. xi. 100*), which has so terrible a fascination for them.

He led us where the rock made open door,
 And there he beat his wings my brow upon ;
 Then promised me full safe a journey o'er.
 As on the right, up to the hill, whereon 100
 Is set the church commanding from on high
 The well-ruled city, easily is won,
 O'er Rubaconte, on the steep slope nigh,
 By means of steps constructed long ago,
 When registers and standards safe might lie, 105
 So with more ease our steps did upward go
 On the steep bank which from the next round
 fell.
 But the high rock on each side close did show :
 There, as we turned our bodies, with sweet spell
Beati pauperes spiritu did flow, 110
 By voices sung in mode ineffable.

⁹⁸ The act implies the obliteration of the first of the seven P's (C. ix. 112). The penitent was at last cured of the sin of pride, which he had recognised as that which most easily beset him.

¹⁰⁰ The church is that of S. Miniato at Florence, which is ironically described as "well-governed." Rubaconte was the bridge now known as the Ponte alle Grazie, from a chapel on it dedicated to the Madonna delle Grazie, but in Dante's time named after a Podestà who had laid its first stone in 1237 (*Vill.* vi. 26; *Malisp.* c. 129). The ascent from the bridge to the church has, within the last few years, been modernised, the old steps having been replaced by a wide stone staircase, with balustrades and landings. The "right hand" implies, however, a somewhat different arrangement from the present, in which the steps go straight up.

¹⁰⁵ The line refers to two frauds which had furnished materials in their time for *causes célèbres*, but which it is scarcely needful to retail at length. In the one case, an advocate, Baldo Aguglione, a zealous Ghibelline, had, in the interest of his client Niccola Acciaioli, erased some entries in the public records, by which the latter was involved in a charge of the subornation of false evidence (*Dino C.* i. 43, ed. 1862). In the other, one of the citizens of Florence was charged with having falsified the scales which he used in selling salt, or, in another story, in the measure in which he sold his wine, and so secured a dishonest gain. The words, however, imply the prevalence of such frauds, and may, perhaps, be taken generally.

¹¹⁰ The beatitude appears appropriate to the circle of the proud which the pilgrim is leaving, rather than that of the envious on which he is about to enter. It hails, as it were, the completion of the first step of the soul's purification. Elsewhere (C. xv. 37, xvii. 67, xix. 49, xxii. 1, xxiv. 151, xxvii. 7), the beatitudes are always uttered by the warder-angels of the respective circles. Here the plural seems to imply (we are not told whose voices were heard) that the spirits in the first or second circle, or both, at last joined as in chorus.

Ah me ! how diverse do these passes show
 From those of Hell ; for here with anthems clear
 Men enter, there with wailing and with woe.
 Up by the holy steps we then did bear, 115
 And far more easy seemed it then to me
 Than on the plain it did before appear.
 I therefore : " Master, say what burdens flee
 Away from off me, that no weariness
 Comes on me from our prompt activity ? " 120
 He answered : " When the P's that yet do press
 Thy brow, as half-obliterated shown,
 Like this wiped out, shall one by one grow less,
 Thy feet, to good-will so obedient grown,
 Not only shall fatigue no longer know, 125
 But their delight in pressing on shall own."
 Then did I act as men who onward go
 With something on their heads they know not
 what,
 Save that the nods of friends suspicion sow ;
 Wherefore their hands help, searching out the spot, 130
 And seek and find, nor will that task forego,
 For which the eyesight's power sufficeth not ;
 And, with my right hand's fingers stretched out, lo !
 I found but six the letters that erewhile
 The great Key-bearer on my brow traced so : 135
 My Master looked and met me with a smile.

¹¹² A reminiscence of many passages in the *Inferno* (iii. 22, iv. 26, 27, v. 25, vi. 19, vii. 26); an anticipation of many in the *Purgatorio* (see last note).

¹¹⁷ The reader will note the significance of the fact that, pride being conquered, it is easier to climb the steep ascent than to walk on the level ground. The secret of that greater ease is explained in Virgil's answer. Sin is the one great impediment. In proportion as that is conquered, progress requires less effort. *Vires acquirit eundo* is true of the pilgrim's progress. When the victory is complete it will be simply a joy and a delight.

¹²⁷ Over and above the vividness with which a common incident in daily life is described as analogous to a spiritual experience, we have the suggestive thought that the true humility is unconscious that it is humble. The pilgrim does not know that the "P" of the sin of pride has been erased.

The Second Circle—The Envious—Their Discipline—Sapia of Siena

WE had thus reached the summit of the stair,
 Where narrows yet a second time the hill,
 Which, as 'tis climbed, doth each one's sin
 repair ;

There also doth a cornice circle still
 Around the slope, as did the former one,
 Save that more sharply this its arc doth fill.

5

Shade there is none, nor sculpture shows thereon,
 So bare the bank seems, so seems bare the way,
 With but the livid colour of the stone.

"If here, for souls of whom to ask we stay,"
 The Poet reasoned, "cause have we to fear,
 Lest this our choice should cause too much
 delay."

10

Then turned his fixed eye on the sun's light clear,
 And of his right side did a centre make,
 And round him moved his left as he stood there.

15

"O pleasant Light in whom I trust, and take
 This our new path, do thou our footsteps guide,
 As we would guidance here within partake ;

⁵ We have entered on the cornice of the envious. Its sharper curve results from the gradual decrease of the diameter of the conical mountain.

⁷ The word "shade" has been taken in many different senses, as that of trees, as meaning "soul," as equivalent to an outline or *intaglio* design. Of these, the last is beyond all question the most satisfactory. What is meant is, that this cornice had no historical illustrations like those described in the two previous Cantos.

⁹ The "livid" colour is, as in Ovid's description of the House of Envy (*Met.* ii. 761-768), the symbol of that sin.

¹⁰ In the first circle the pilgrims had waited till the souls that were journeying onward had shown them the way. Here it is the doom of the envious, who had looked grudgingly on the progress of others, not to move onward, but to stand still. Virgil therefore does not wait to ask his way, but looks to the Sun, the symbol of Divine illumination, working through Nature, the "Light that lighteth every man" (*H.* i. 17; *Par.* xxv. 54), for guidance. As it was now afternoon and they were looking southwards, they had the sun on their right, and the movement described indicates that they turned their steps in that direction ; ever to the right in Purgatory, as ever to the left in Hell. To look to the sun was in accordance with Cato's counsel (*C.* i. 107).

Thou warm'st the world, thy beams shine far and wide;
 Unless some good cause bid the contrary, 20
 Thy rays should ever be our leaders tried."
 What space with us a measured mile doth lie,
 That had we there already travelled through,
 In briefest time, through will's prompt energy.
 And now the sound of souls that towards us flew, 25
 We heard, although we saw not those who spoke,
 And us, with kindly words, to Love's feast drew.
 And the first voice that through the silence broke
 "*Vinum non habent*" said, in clearest tone,
 And passed behind and oft the echoes woke. 30
 And ere its sound was lost, through distance gone,
 Another passing, "Lo, Orestes I,"
 Cried out, and he too stayed not, but went on.
 "O Father," said I, "what means each strange cry?" 35
 And as I asked, behold a third did sound,
 And spake aloud, "Love ye your enemy."

²⁰ The words are sometimes explained as referring to the subjective hindrances to inward illumination presented by man's sin and ignorance. It is, I think, more natural to say that they point to a special revelation of the Divine Will, which, when it comes, supersedes the guidance of the light that comes through Nature. We may compare Dryden's lines in the *Religio Laici*, in which he says of Reason that it "so dies and so dissolves in supernatural light."

²⁵ The voices are those of angels. The special form of the discipline of the envious prevents their being instructed by the eye (l. 70), and their meditations are therefore guided by what they hear, as inviting them to the table of that Love which had been conspicuous by its absence in their lives.

²⁹ Why was the text chosen for the implied meditation on the sin of envy? We must believe that Dante had from it worked out a sermon for himself, and the main thought of such a sermon would have been the contrast between the satisfaction felt by the envious in the misfortune and shame of others, and the considerate tenderness of the Virgin Mother, who reported the failure of the wine at the marriage-feast of Cana (*John* ii. 1-10), only that the want might be supplied before others had discovered it.

³³ The words recall a memorable incident in the friendship of Orestes and Pylades, where the latter had feigned to be the former in order that he might die to save his friend, while Orestes in his turn came forward and proclaimed who he was. Dante had probably read the story in *Cic. de Amic.* 7, to which he had turned for comfort in his great sorrow (*Conv.* ii. 13). In that self-sacrifice of reciprocated love there was the truest antidote to envy.

³⁶ Love finds its crown and consummation in the words of the Divine Friend (*Matt.* v. 44). How could one who had grasped those words in their fulness envy the small advantages of others?

Then my good Master : " In this circle's round
 Is scourged the guilt of envy ; so the cords
 Of that same scourge by love itself are bound.
 The curb must echo with far other words : 40
 Thou, so I deem, wilt hear it soon, ere yet
 Thou reach the Pass which pardon full affords.
 But through the air gaze thou with nought to let,
 And thou shalt see what folk before us lies,
 And each one close against the rock is set." 45
 Then wider than before I oped my eyes :
 I looked in front and spirits saw arrayed
 In cloaks that with the rock did harmonise.
 And when a few steps onward we had made,
 I heard their cry, " O Mary, for us pray," 50
 Cry, " Michael, Peter, yea, and all Saints, aid."
 I deem that on the earth none wends his way
 Of heart so hard as not to thrill with pain,
 Through pitying those who next before me lay :
 For when I did a greater nearness gain, 55
 So that their acts and mien came clear in sight,
 The heavy sorrow did my sad eyes drain.

³⁷ The discipline of the sin of envy begins, like that of the sin of pride, with examples of the opposite grace. There must be the stimulation of the capacity of loving—the "expulsive and impulsive power of a new affection" (*Chalmers*). On the sin of envy, see *C.* xv. 49; *H.* vi. 49; *Par.* ix. 127. The work which completes the cure is found in examples of the malignity and punishment of the sin. The "Pass of Pardon" is the place where the second 'P' on the poet's brow is cancelled, as in *C.* xii. 98. The parable of the "whip" and the "curb" is given fully in *Conv.* iv. 26.

⁴⁸ The colour of the stone, it will be remembered, was the livid hue proverbially associated with envy (*l.* 9).

⁵⁰ The prayers are taken from the Litany of Saints, the names of Mary and Michael standing in the actual order of the Roman Litany. They, in their beatitude, are sharers in a joy which is not diminished, but increased, by the number of those who share it, and the prayer implies an aspiration after that element of blessedness.

⁵⁵ The penalty connects itself with the etymology of *invidia*. The sinners had looked with an evil eye on the good of others. They are punished by the privation of the power to see that good till they have learnt to rejoice in it. The picture of the blind beggars standing at the doors of churches on special indulgence days, common at all times, may have been a special reminiscence of the year of Jubilee when Dante was at Rome.

They seemed to me in coarsest sackcloth dight,
And with his shoulder each the other propped,
And all leant up against the embankment's height. 60
E'en thus the blind, whose means of life are stopped,
Stand at our Pardons asking alms for bread,
And one man's head is on another's dropped,
That pity may in others' hearts be shed,
Not only at the sound of words they speak, 65
But at the sight which no less grief hath bred.
And as the blind the sun's rays vainly seek,
So to the souls of whom I spake but now
The light of Heaven shows but a glimmering streak.
For thread of iron pierceth every brow, 70
And sews their eyes up, as with falcon wild
Is done, since else its wings no rest allow.
Cruel I seemed to leave them thus beguiled,
To gaze on others, yet myself unseen ;
Then turned I to my Counsel wise and mild. 75
Well knew he what the dumb to say did mean,
And therefore waited not for my demand,
But said, "Speak thou, with words both brief and
keen."
Virgil stood by me on that outer band
Of the high bank, whence chance of fall is met, 80
For by no rampart circled it doth stand ;
On the other side devoted souls were set,
Who from that suture did such pain endure
That with the tears forced out their cheeks were wet.

⁷¹ The somewhat cruel custom of thus taming falcons is mentioned by the Emperor Frederick in his treatise *De Arte Venandi* (*Scart., Phil.*).

⁷⁴ One notes the delicate touch of courteous feeling, in itself the very opposite of envy.

⁸⁴ The tears that flow slowly indicate the difficulty of repentance where envy has been the besetting sin. The prayer that follows is, in substance, that those tears may flow fast and freely, the impediment of the "scum" of guilt, which now impedes their vision, being removed. What such souls need is the encouragement given by the assurance that the end, the vision of the "high light" of God, is certain, though the discipline is slow and painful. The "river of the mind" that flows from the fountain of light will at last come in full force to purify and clear.

To them I turned and said, "O people, sure 85
 To gaze upon the glorious Light on high,—
 The one sole end which doth your aim allure,—
 So may God's grace bid every foul scum fly
 That stains your conscience, and the mind's stream
 flow

Full clear and limpid through it inwardly! 90
 Tell me, for that will dear and gracious show,
 If here dwell soul of Latin lineage,
 For him, perchance 'twere good that I should
 know."

"O brother mine, each soul its heritage
 Finds in the one true City; thou wouldst say, 95
 'Who in Italia made his pilgrimage.'"

I seemed to hear this answer some short way
 In front of where I stood, and therefore went
 Where better chance of hearing me had they.

Among the rest I saw a soul intent;
 And shouldst thou ask how this I could descry,
 I say her chin, like blind man's, was up-bent.

"Spirit," I said, "who stoop'st to mount on high,
 If thou art she who now did answer give,
 Tell me thy name or where thy home did lie." 105

"I in Siena," answered she, "did live,
 And with the rest my foul life purify,
 Weeping to Him that He Himself may give:

Though Sapia I was called, yet nought had I 110
 Of sapience, and rejoiced in others' ill
 Far more than in mine own prosperity.

⁹² "Latin" is used here, as elsewhere, in its widest sense, as equivalent to Italian (l. 96). The answer to the question shows that the discipline was not in vain. The soul that speaks has risen from the narrow limitations of its earthly jealousies to the thought of the citizenship of the heavenly Jerusalem. We note the contrast with the "heavenly Athens" of the *Conv.*

¹⁰⁹ We are left to the guesses of commentators as to the history of Sapia. Whether the name belonged to man or woman, whether, if the latter, as all but one report, she was the wife of Cino de Pigoso, or of the Provenzan Salvani of C. xii. 121, (?) or of Ghinibaldi Saracino of the family of the Bigozzi, we are unable to decide.

And lest thou deem I speak deceiving still,
 Hear if I was as foolish as I tell.
 When my life's arch was sloping down the hill,
 My citizens were joined in battle fell 115
 On Colle's plain, with many a foe in sight,
 And I prayed God for what through Him befell.
 There were they routed, and in bitter flight
 Were turned, and I, beholding that defeat,
 Felt in my soul an unsurpassed delight, 120
 So that I upward looked with o'erbold heat
 And cried to God, 'Now fear I Thee no more,'
 As did the blackbird for one spring day sweet.
 Peace with my God I sought ere life was o'er,
 Just at the last, nor would my life e'en now 125
 Be by my penance lessened in its score,
 Had it not been that in each holy vow
 Piero Pettignano remembered me,
 In whom for me a sorrowing love did grow.

114 Falling back on what Dante himself tells us, with some additions from the commentators, we learn that Sapia was past the age of thirty-five (*H. i. 1*); that the Siennese and other Ghibellines under Salvani were defeated by the Florentines at Colle, a fortress near Volterra, in 1269; that Salvani was taken and beheaded; that Sapia prayed for the defeat of her own countrymen, assuming that that was the will of God; that she rejoiced when she saw them routed from the fortress of Colle, and then prayed thus, "Now, O God, do with me what Thou wilt, all the ill that Thou canst; now my wishes are satisfied, and I die content" (*Benv., Scart., Vill. vii. 31*).

123 The words, more or less analogous to our proverb that "one swallow does not make a summer," imply a fable. A blackbird had found shelter in a house during winter. When a fine day came at the end of January (such days are known in Lombardy as *giorni della merla*), he began to sing out, saying to his protector, "Now, master, I care not for thee, for the winter is past" (*Scart.*). The proverb is found in Sacchetti, *Nov. 149*.

128 Piero Pettignano was probably of Siena (*d. 1289*). In his calling of a combmaker, from which he took his name (*pettino* = comb), he was noted for his unusual honesty, and would refund the price if he had sold a defective article. He entered the Franciscan Order as a Tertiary, gained the reputation of a saint who worked miracles, and was canonised by the Senate of Siena in 1328. A tomb, altar, and *ciborium* were dedicated to him in the Church of S. Francis, and his picture is still to be seen there and in other churches. Sapia was said to have often given him alms while she lived, and he requited her charity by the greater charity of his prayers for her soul's peace (*Scart., Phil.*).

But thou who passest by, who may'st thou be, 130
 Asking our state, and go'st with open eyes,
 E'en so I deem; and speak'st with breath yet free? "
 "Mine eyes," I said, "I here shall lose likewise,
 But for brief time, for little the offence
 Which they have wrought by envious jealousies. 135
 Far greater terror keeps me in suspense
 Of the dread torment working there below,
 For even now I feel that weight immense."
 And she: "Who then up here doth guide thee so,
 If of retreat thou any hope discern?" 140
 And I: "Lo! there my silent escort know,
 And living am I; therefore ask in turn,
 O chosen soul, if thou would'st have me stir
 For thee my mortal feet in yonder bourne."
 "Ah me! so new is this that meets mine ear," 145
 She answered, "'tis sure sign God loves thee well;
 Wherefore at times let prayer thy succour bear,
 And by the keen desires that in thee dwell,
 If e'er in Tuscan land thy steps pass through,
 I ask thee to my kin my praise to tell: 150
 Thou wilt find them among that worthless crew
 Who hope in Talamone, and will waste
 More hopes than were to Dian's waters due :
 To greater loss the admirals shall haste."

¹³¹ It will be remembered that Sapia could not see the speaker who had addressed her.

¹³⁴ The self-analysis is, if I mistake not, of special interest. The pilgrim knows that he is not exempt from envy, had perhaps felt at least a bitterness like that of Asaph when he saw "the ungodly in such prosperity" (*Ps.* lxxiii. 3), but far more was he conscious that pride had been his besetting sin. So *Vill.* (ix. 136) describes him as proud and scornful, eager for glory and popular applause, disdaining the converse of all but scholars.

¹⁴⁴ Shall he go to the relations of Sapia who were yet living and ask their prayers for her? She, in her reply, speaks as feeling that the pity which makes the offer will give a power to his prayers which might be lacking to those of others.

¹⁵² The words are a prophecy after the event, taunting the Siennese with the failure of three schemes for the aggrandisement of their city. (1) They wished to become a commercial power, like Pisa and Genoa, and to construct a port near the fortress of Talamone, in the Maremma, not far from Orbitello, which they actually bought in 1303 for 8000 gold florins; but soil and climate

The Course of the Arno—Guido del Duca—Renier de' Calboli

“WHO then is he that circles this hill’s slope,
 Ere he, by death enfranchised, here hath flown,
 Who at his will doth close his eyes or ope?”
 “I know him not, but know that not alone
 He comes; ask thou, he nearer thee doth wend,
 And that he speak, greet him with gentle tone.”
 So did two souls, as each to each did bend,
 Hold converse of me there upon my right.
 Then upward turned their face, as greeting friend.
 And one said: “O thou soul, who still art dight
 In flesh, yet to high Heaven art moving on,
 Of thy great love console us; tell outright
 Whence thou art come, and who, for thou hast won
 Such marvel from us by this grace of thine,
 As wins a thing that ne’er before was done.”
 And I: “There flows, where Tuscan slopes incline,
 A stream that springs from Falterona’s fount,
 Nor do a hundred miles its course confine;

were against them and the plan was abandoned. In 1300, however, Florence imported corn from Sicily which was unshipped at Talamone (*Phil.*). (2) The abundant supply of water for fountains, such as Fontebranda (*H.* xxx. 78) and others, led the Siennese to the belief that there was a subterranean river, to which popular legends, starting from the tradition that a statue of that goddess had stood in the market-place of Siena, as that of Mars did at the Ponte Vecchio of Florence, gave the name of Diana, and which they hoped to utilise in connection with the Talamone scheme. (3) The word “admirals” has been taken (*a*) in its ordinary meaning, (*b*) as applied to the contractors or commissioners for the construction of the harbour. For them Sapia prophesies that they would lose both time and money, probably their lives also. Possibly “the admiral of the Siennese fleet” had become a proverbial taunt at Florence. We ask, as we read the lines, whether Dante puts the words into the mouth of Sapia as showing that her ruling passion was not yet extinct, or whether we are to find in them a conscious or unconscious utterance of the temper that rejoices in the misfortunes of others, the ἐπιχαιρεκακία of Greek ethics. The Siennese seem to have provoked him more than the people of any other city in Italy. Comp. *H.* xxix. 121-132.

¹ The two speakers are Guido del Duca (l. 81) and Renier de’ Calboli (l. 88), both of Romagna. They, with their eyes closed, have heard the words of one who sees and is alive (C. xiii. 142). One of them (l. 4) has learnt also that he has a companion with him. Then, with the upturned look of the blind, they begin to ask for further knowledge.

¹⁶ The whole Canto appears to have been written in one of the darkest

This frame I bring from banks that it surmount :
 To tell thee who I am were speech in vain, 20
 For yet my name sounds not of great account."
 "If well thy meaning doth a footing gain
 Within my mind," then answered me the one
 Who first spake, "thou of Arno speakest plain."
 Then said the other : "Why this mystery thrown 25
 By him upon the name that stream doth bear,
 As on a thing too dreadful to be shown?"
 And then the shade that did that question hear,
 Thus answered : "That I know not, but indeed
 'Tis meet that valley's name oblivion share ; 30
 For from its source, where such full streams proceed,
 In that Alp-range whence is Peloro riven,
 That in few spots it doth that mark exceed,

hours of Dante's life, when he was most tried by the grief of exile and the sense of baseness and treachery in those around him, perhaps by the utter failure of the hopes which had been centred in the success of Henry VII. Comp. his letter to the "*scelestissimi Fiorentini*," written in 1311 (*Frat. O. M.* iii. pp. 450-458). Tuscany and Romagna are alike hateful to him, and he pours out his most scathing philippic upon both of them, making an opportunity out of the question which might have been answered in a single word.

¹⁷ Falterona is one of the highest of the Tuscan Apennines, near the borders of Romagna, and within the domains of the Counts Guidi. The course of the Arno is on its southern slope. The omission of the name of the river is explained in ll. 25-30. From its source to its mouth it was as an accursed river. It would be well if its name and place could disappear from the map of Italy. We are reminded of the imprecations of *Job* xviii. 17.

³¹ The word "*pregno*" of the original may be a rendering of Lucan (ii. 397). Speaking of a district in the Apennines he says—

*"Nullogue a vertice tellus
 Altius intumuit propiusque accessit Olympo."*

And in this case it would point simply to height. Another rendering refers the word to the character of that part of the Apennines as a watershed, the sources of the Arno and the Tiber, the Lamone, the Savio, and two other rivers lying within the compass of eighteen miles.

³² The word Alpine (*alpestro*) seems used in its distinctive Greek and Italian meaning for a mountain below the level of perpetual snow. Pelorus, the north-east point of the triangle of Sicily, is thought of as physically a continuation of the Apennine range, the last vertebra, as it were, of the great backbone of Italy. The tradition that it had been parted by some great convulsion from that chain is embodied in Dante's favourite poets, *Æn.* iii. 414-419 ; *Lucan*, ii. 437.

Down to the point where to the sea is given
 A due return for what the sky hath dried, 35
 Whence rivers on their downward course are driven,
 Virtue her head, as though a foe, must hide,
 Like viper shunned of all, or through ill chance
 Of climate, or by evil custom tried;
 And hence that wretched vale's inhabitants 40
 Do in their nature such a change endure,
 'Twould seem they fed, as Circe's visitants,
 Among foul swine, of acorns worthier sure
 Than of aught else that's made for human food.
 At first it creeps with scanty stream and poor, 45
 Then lower down it finds a currish brood,
 That snarl far more than they have power to bite,
 And turns its face from them in scornful mood.

³⁵ Simple as the physical theory of the rivers being replenished by the evaporation from the sea may seem to us, we note that it was one of the new theories in which Dante, as a student of science, prided himself (comp. *Par.* ii. on the spots on the moon's surface), and the dominant mediæval view, as set forth by his master Brunetto in the *Tesoro* (ii. 36), was that the springs from which rivers flow were replenished by filtration from the sea through the crevices of the earth.

³⁷ The absence of virtue was the common characteristic of the whole valley of the Arno. The inhabitants had lost their true humanity, and were bestialised, like those whom Circe had transformed by her incantations (*Æn.* vii. 19; *Hom. Od.* x. 210). The various forms of evil are specialised in the lines that follow. The passage may have been, in part, based upon Dante's favourite Boethius (iv. 3), who compares human vices with the same passions as seen in brutes. The swine are the dwellers in the vale of Casentino, then under the Counts Guidi, on whom (lords, or vassals, or both) Dante fixes the brand of gross licentiousness. His feelings towards them had probably been exasperated by the time-serving and treacherous policy which they adopted in 1311 and 1312 in regard to the great Ghibelline movement under Henry VII., on which he had built so much. The fact that they were known as the Counts of Porciano, and that large herds of swine were kept by the peasants, may have suggested the *nomen et omen* view. Traditions, more or less vague, report that he had been received as a guest by two of the Counts, but also that he had been imprisoned for a time in the fortress of Porciano (*Troya*, 123). It is, at least, suggestive that Dante's memorable letter to the Emperor is dated from the sources of the Arno (*Frat. O. M.* iii. 474), and the letter to the people of Florence, of which this Canto is almost an echo, was written in the same region (*Frat. O. M.* iii. 458).

⁴⁵ The epithet "poor" may either refer to the meagreness of the stream, or be simply an epithet of scorn.

⁴⁶ There may have been local reasons for the successive denunciations. After flowing through the valley of the Casentino (C v. 94; *H.* xxx. 65), it passes by the village of Quarata seven *kilomètres* from Arezzo, which

It flows and falls, and as it gains in might,
 Finds the dogs changed to savage wolves and fell, ⁵⁰
 That ditch accursèd and in evil plight.
 Descending then, its streams through deep dales swell,
 And find the foxes whom all ill frauds fill;
 'Gainst fear of traps their cunning serves them
 well;
 Nor cease I, though another hear me still, ⁵⁵
 And well 'twill be for him to bear in mind
 What Truth's high Spirit opens at its will.
 I see thy grandson whom those wolves shall find
 As hunter fierce upon that wild stream's ways,
 With spell of fear their troubled souls to bind; ⁶⁰
 He sells the flesh, though life still in them stays,
 And then he slays them, like a worn-out steer;
 Many he robs of life, himself of praise.
 Blood-stained he issues from that forest drear,
 And leaves it such that for ten centuries, ⁶⁵
 Its primal growth it never more shall bear."

probably supplies the "curs" of l. 46, then turns abruptly to the west, passes into the Val d'Arno, flows northward below Vallombrosa, receives its tributaries and finds itself among the "wolves" of Florence (*Par.* xxv. 6), that animal being the special symbol of greed (*H.* i. 49).

⁵² Beyond Florence the Arno passes through another gorge to Pisa, which furnishes the "foxes," conspicuous for the cunning of which we have had instances in *H.* xv. 67, xxvii. 75. Pisa, like Arezzo, was Ghibelline in its politics, but neither city came up to the poet's ideal standard of faithfulness to principle.

⁵⁵ Guido apologises, as it were, for speaking of the evil deeds of Renieri's descendants, on the ground that for Dante "forewarned" will be "fore-armed." The "truthful spirit" is that of the Divine inspiration which reveals the future to him.

⁵⁸ The grandson, or nephew, of Renieri is Folcieri de' Calboli of Romagna, who was called in as Podestà of Florence in 1302, and used his authority, in combination with the *Neri*, to inflict severe penalties, death, confiscation, exile, on the *Bianchi* (*Vill.* viii. 59; *Frat. V. D.* p. 188). The "wolves" are the citizens of Florence, who had been so described in l. 50. The word "sells" implies that his ferocity had the additional baseness of being prompted by greed of gain.

⁶⁴ The "gloomy wood" seems to connect itself with *H.* i. 5, but not sufficiently so as to lead us to limit and localise the earlier allegory, which remains in all the fulness of its meaning, as embracing the whole inner life of the poet. To Dante's spirit, bleeding with the sense of wrong, the evil wrought by such a tyrant as Folcieri seemed absolutely irremediable.

As at the news of grievous miseries
 The listener's face is clouded o'er with gloom,
 Upon whatever side the danger rise,
 So I that other soul who heard this doom 70
 With head inclined, saw grieved in sore chagrin,
 When on his soul the sentence dread did loom.
 The speech of one, the other's look and mien,
 Made me wish much to know who they might be,
 And this I asked, with prayers thrown in between. 75
 Whereat the spirit who first spake to me,
 Began again: "Thou wishest I should bend,
 What thou for me dost not, to do for thee;
 But since God wills so visibly to send
 Such grace to thee, thy prayer I will not spurn: 80
 Guido del Duca I, to this attend.
 So did my boiling blood with envy burn
 That if I saw a man with gladsome brow,
 Thou would'st have seen me pale and livid turn.
 As I sowed then, such straw-crop reap I now: 85
 O race of men, why place your whole heart there
 Where a fixed law no partner will allow?
 Renier is this; and he the fame doth bear
 Of all the house of Calboli, where none
 Of that high praise of his is worthy heir; 90

⁶⁷ A *v. l.* gives "future" instead of "grievous," but MSS. preponderate for the latter.

⁷⁸ Dante, it will be remembered, had not given his name in answer to Guido's question.

⁸¹ Of Guido del Duca we know only the fact that he was of Brettinoro (l. 112) near Forlì, and what he tells of himself here, as being in the circle of the envious, and reaping now the harvest of the seed which he had sown in his lifetime.

⁸⁷ Dante returns to his favourite thought that in the possession of earthly goods, the presence of a partner diminishes the satisfaction of possession, while, in the higher region of heavenly good, the joy of each is heightened by the participation of others. *Comp. C.* xv. 61-75; *Par.* xxii. 24.

⁸⁸ Of Renier de' Calboli of Forlì we know as little as of Guido del Duca. He has been identified with a Guelph Podestà of Parma of that name in 1252. He is said (*Benv.*) to have died in 1295. For other references to Forlì, see *C.* xxiv. 32; *H.* xvi. 99, xxvii. 43.

⁹⁰ The words show some personal experience of the degeneracy of the Calboli of Forlì in the course of Dante's exile, but we are left to conjecture what it was.

Nor is his stock thus stripped the only one
 'Twixt Po and mountain, Reno and the sea,
 Reft of the good whence truth and joy are won.
 For all within these limits filled we see
 With plants of poison, so that all too late
 To check their growth good tillage now would be.
 Where is good Lizio, where Manardi great,
 Guy of Carpigna and Pier Traversar' ?
 O Romagnuoli, race degenerate !

95

⁹² The " mountain " is the Apennine range : the Reno (*Inf.* xviii. 61), the river which flows by Bologna. The four boundaries are those of the province of Romagna in Dante's time.

⁹³ The words point to what should be the characteristics of a noble race—loyalty to the higher truth which is the guide of life, but also the culture and refinement which are the elements of delight. What has been said of this family is extended in l. 94 to the whole region of Romagna. Dante mourns, as Burke mourned, that the " age of chivalry " was fled. With all its faults it had elements of " sweetness and light," and the world was worse and not better for their absence.

⁹⁷ The contrast between the good old times of Romagna and its later degeneracy presents a parallel to the like contrast between the past and present of Florence as painted by Cacciaguida in *Par.* xvi. and xvii. Both bring out what one may call the archæological element of Dante's mind, the love of old-world stories, which were fused by his genius into materials for his poem. To us these names are like old coins on which we can scarcely trace the image and superscription. To him they were, as the Border-legends were to Scott, full of life, associated with memories of romantic scenes, and stories which he had heard from the lips of eye-witnesses. Lizio of Valbona, Lord of Ravenna, also a citizen of Forlì and a friend of Renier de' Calboli, was conspicuous for a large-hearted courtesy and hospitality. His daughter is said to have been married to Richard Manardi. Local traditions at Valbona (regardless of the fact that he was dead in 1300) speak of his having been one of Dante's hosts during his exile, and point to the stone on which the poet used to sit. Possibly he may have been a guest of Lizio's in the earlier period of his life. Henry Manardi was a friend of Lizio's and of like character, living at Brettinoro (l. 112) or Faenza. P. di Dante and Benv. state that he was also a friend of Guido del Duca, who was to him as an *alter ego*, but this seems hardly consistent with Dante's estimate of Guido's character.

⁹⁸ We pass in Pier Traversaro to a memorable name among the contemporaries of Frederick II. As Lord of Ravenna, he, with the help of Bologna, held out, as long as he lived, against the Emperor's attacks in 1239. He died in 1240, much lamented by his subjects, and the city then fell into Frederick's power (Alberti, *Hist. di Bologna* x.). Rossi, however (*Stor. di Ravenna*), makes Paolo Traversaro, the Son of Pier, the hero of these events, and assigns the death of Pier to 1225. Of Guido da Carpigna, between Marecchia and Foglia in Montefeltro, who was a contemporary of the elder Traversaro, tradition reports incidents of a profuse and generous hospitality.

When shall a Fabbro for Bologna care ? 100
 When shall Faenz' a Bernard Fosco own,
 Full noble growth from shoots that lowly are !
 Wonder then not, O Tuscan, if I moan,
 When I Guido da Prata call to mind,
 And Ugolin of Azzo, whom we've known ; 105
 Frederic Tignoso, with his kith and kind;
 The Traversari, Anastagi's line;
 (Neither of which true heir hath left behind),
 Ladies and knights; the labours wont to join
 With sports, once love and courtesy's delight, 110
 Where now men's hearts to baseness vile decline.

¹⁰⁰ By many commentators "*Fabbro*" is taken as a common noun, and he is described as an artisan, Lambertaccio by name, who, by his integrity and unselfishness, had risen to great influence among the citizens of Bologna. Taking it as a proper name, we may connect it with the fact that a Fabro of Bologna was Podestà of Pisa in 1254, and that a Fabio (*Fabro*?) Lambertacci of that city filled the honourable post of keeper of the Caroccio in 1228 (*Scart.*).

¹⁰¹ Bernardin di Fosco was said, like Fabbro, to have risen from the ranks, till he was recognised as Lord of Faenza, and was perhaps also Podestà of Pisa in 1249. The stress which Dante lays on the goodness of men of low estate falls in with the whole tone of *Canz.* xvi. and of *Conv.* iv., based on it, as to the nature of true nobility. His Ghibellinism assumed an ideal emperor, an ideal aristocracy, and he had broken loose from the baser feudalism which postulated a hereditary *noblesse*. For him it was true, *Virtus sola nobilitas*. The *Canzone* gives the first utterance in point of time; then comes the prose expansion in the *Conv.*; then the historical induction which we have here.

¹⁰⁴ The notices of Guido de Prata, so named, probably, from a castle between Faenza and Ravenna, are sufficiently hazy, the only facts stated, in addition to general excellence of character, being that he was a friend of Ugolino of Azzo, and, like him, had risen from the ranks of the people. Of Ugolino it has been conjectured that he belonged to the house of the Ubaldini of Florence (probably to a branch settled at Faenza), and that he was a brother of Ubaldino della Pela (*C.* xxiv. 29) and of the Cardinal Ottaviano (*H.* x. 120).

¹⁰⁶ Tignoso is said to have been of Rimini by descent, but to have been also connected with Brettinoro. For the Traversari family of Ravenna see note on l. 98. The Anastagi, also of Ravenna, were expelled by the house of Polenta, leaving behind them the reputation of lambs who had been driven out by wolves. The repeated praises of other families seem to indicate at least a transient feeling of disappointment on Dante's part with the house of Polenta. The absence of an heir implies either that the families were extinct, or that their present representatives were unworthy of their lineage. As a matter of history, the house of the Traversari passed away in 1292 in the person of William, who died without male issue, and whose daughter became the wife of Stephen, king of Hungary.

¹⁰⁹ The words paint the golden age of chivalry, with its tournaments and

O Brettinoro, why not flee from sight,
 Since gone to wreck is all thy family,
 And many more, to 'scape being vile outright?
 Good is Bagnacaval's sterility,
 And ill does Castrocar', and Conio worse,
 Who rear of Counts such evil progeny.
 Well will Pagani do, their demon curse
 Being taken from them, yet their evil fame
 Shall still cleave close when men their deeds
 rehearse.

115

120

courts of love, and *preux chevaliers* and fair ladies. That form of life had passed away, partly through the sterner view of life presented by the preachers of the Mendicant Orders, partly through the commercial spirit, which brought with it the evil greed of gain, and Dante looked back on it with feelings of regretful admiration. Comp. the description by Rolandino of Padua in *Faur.* i. 302.

¹¹² Brettinoro, a small city in Romagna near Forli, had been conspicuous in the period of which Dante speaks as sharing in the lustre of a courteous hospitality. As the story ran, a column stood in the piazza with rings fixed on it, each belonging to one of the chief houses of the city. A stranger entering the town fastened his horse's bridle to one of these rings, and at once became the guest of the family whose ring he had, by choice or accident, selected (*Sca't.*). In the 12th century it had belonged to the Countess Aldrada, conspicuous for her skill in the "gay science," and for the courts of love which were held under her superintendence. She had succeeded in inducing Frederick Barbarossa to raise the siege of Ancona. Her patrimony passed at a later date into the hands of the Malatesta of Rimini, who also obtained possession of Brettinoro, and this fact associated her name with the memories of the poet's later years (*Vill.* viii. 93).

The passionate reproach reminds us of that of Pistoia in *H.* xxv. 10. The family of the Manardi and that of Guido del Duca had both, as Ghibellines, been expelled in 1295, and with them, as l. 114 implies, many others who chose exile rather than apostasy.

¹¹⁵ The Counts of Bagnacavallo, a castle, now a town, about five miles from Ferrara, were the Malavicini, and it seems to have been a case of *nomen et omen*. In 1249 they drove the Guelphs under Guido da Polenta out of Rimini. In the last decade of the 13th century they were in ill repute as often changing sides. When Dante wrote they would appear to have been on the point of dying out.

¹¹⁶ The fortress of Castrocaro had belonged in the 13th century to a family of Ghibelline counts, who submitted to the Church in 1282. They were succeeded by the Ordellaffi of Forli, who sold the fortress to the Florentines. Conio, near Castrocaro, had also been under Ghibelline rule. Dante obviously looked on its owners as unworthy representatives of the cause. It would be well if they would die out like those of Bagnacavallo.

¹¹⁸ The intensest scorn falls on the family of the Pagani, Lords of Imola and Faenza, as represented by Mainardo, the "demon" of this verse. He had been brought up by the Commune of Florence, and therefore, though by descent, and in Romagna, belonging to the Ghibelline party, was constantly changing sides, and, as at once cruel, implacable, and plausible, acquired the

O Ugolin de' Fantoli, thy name
 In safety stands, for none are waiting seen
 Who can, degenerate, mar its praise with shame.
 But go thy way, O Tuscan ; now, I ween,
 'Tis sweeter far for me to weep than speak, 125
 So by our converse grieved my mind hath been."
 We knew each footstep those dear souls and meek
 Heard, as we went, and therefore silently
 They made us bold our onward way to seek.
 When we advancing left that company, 130
 As thunder when it cleaves the air, did thrill
 A voice, and as it spake to us, drew nigh,
 Crying, "Whoever findeth me shall kill,"
 And fled, as thunder peals die off around,
 When the dark cloud no more the sky doth fill. 135
 And when our ears had respite from that sound,
 Behold another with such loud acclaim,
 It seemed like thunder in its quick rebound,
 "I am Aglauros, who a stone became."
 And then, that I might keep the Poet near, 140
 Backward my footsteps, and not forward, came.

epithet with which Dante has branded him. Mainardo died in 1302, so that we have once more a prophecy after the event. It would seem that the poet did not see much change for the better in the action of the family.

121 Ugolin de' Fantoli of Faenza had been in high repute for chivalrous faithfulness. For Dante he had the special attraction of having been a loyal adherent of Manfred. He died without issue in 1282. He at least was spared the shame of degenerate descendants.

124 The long tirade ends in the silence of sorrow. The soul of Guido would fain be left to weep over the troubles of Romagna with his friend, and therefore bids Dante depart. A *v. l.* gives "thy" for "our."

128 The souls were blinded (C. xiii. 70), and therefore could only hear the footsteps of the travellers, who infer from their silence that they had taken the right road as they went on their onward way.

133 The words were those of Cain (*Gen.* iv. 14), as the great typical instance of malignant envy ; but as Cain was in the circle of Hell to which he gave his name, the voice must be thought of as an angelic or otherwise supernatural utterance, as in ll. 26-35.

139 The story of Aglauros as told by Ovid (*Met.* ii. 708-832) was that she was jealous of her sister Erse, who was beloved by Mercury, and was therefore transformed into a stone. The lines that follow paint the poet's terror at the warning conveyed by the two utterances.

Already was there stillness through the air,
 And he said to me, "That was the hard rein
 That ought a man within due bounds to bear.
 But ye the bait still swallow, and are ta'en 145
 By the curved hook of that old Enemy,
 And curb and call avail not to restrain.
 The Heavens call on you wheeling round on high,
 And show to you their beauteous orbs eterne.
 Yet your gaze only on the earth doth lie, 150
 And so He chastens who doth all discern."

*The Angel of the Third Circle—The Cure of Envy—The
 Discipline of the Passionate—Examples of Charity*

EVEN as much as 'tween the third hour's close
 And day's beginning see we of that sphere
 Which, like a child, sports on nor seeks repose,
 So much there seemed now, towards evening clear,
 For the bright sun to reach its journey's end; 5
 There it was evening, midnight was it here.

¹⁴³ As in C. xiii. 40, *Conv.* iv. 26, the examples of evil are the curb which restrains men from the indulgence of passions of which that evil was the outcome.

¹⁴⁵ Men, in spite of that warning, swallow the bait with which the great Adversary tempts them (C. xi. 20), and find that they are taken captive by him (*Eccl.* ix. 12; *2 Tim.* ii. 26). The "call," strictly that of the falconer to his bird, answers in like manner to the allurements by which men are invited to choose the more excellent way. The reader will remember the similitudes of *H.* xiii. 112, xvii. 127, xxii. 130.

¹⁴⁹ The "eternal beauties" in which Dante finds a voice are the stars of the firmament. The words connect themselves with the closing lines of each part of the *Comm.* and with the poet's words when he refused to return to Florence under conditions which he thought degrading: "Have I not the sun and the stars wherever I may be?"

¹⁻⁶ After the manner of C. ix. 1-9, we have a characteristic and complicated description of the fact that it was three hours before sunset on the Mount of Purgatory and midnight in Tuscany. The sphere is that of the sun and stars which contain the ecliptic, and which, in its perpetual change of position in its apparent relation to the earth, is compared to the restless movements of a boy. The comparison does not seem a very happy one, and

And straight upon our face its rays did bend,
 Because we so did round the mountain wind
 That we our way towards the West did wend ;
 When I my forehead shrinking back did find 10
 From the bright sheen than at the first far more,
 And things not understood confused my mind ;
 Whereat my hands I raised mine eyebrows o'er,
 And made myself a covert from the light,
 Which thus less bright excess of radiance wore. 15
 As when from water or from mirror bright
 The ray leaps upward to the opposèd side,
 Ascending at an angle opposite
 And equal, as it fell, and goes as wide
 From the plumb-line in that its angle's play, 20
 As science and experiment decide,
 So I seemed smitten by reflected ray,
 Which falling there before me, rose again,
 Wherefore my glance was quick to shrink away.

may, perhaps, be one of the few exceptions to Dante's assertion that the necessities of his triple rhymes had never led him to say anything which he would not have said without them. Possibly, also, the thought may have been suggested by the "*mutatur in horas*" in which Horace (*Ep. ad Pis.* 160) describes the temper of boyhood. That, at least, was literally true of the apparent motion of the heavens.

11 A new glory mingled with the light of the setting sun which fell upon the faces of the pilgrims, and as yet Dante did not see the angel (l. 12) from whom the radiance flowed.

16 The law of optics that the angle of reflection is equal to that of incidence had come before Dante as a student of physical science. Further references, showing a love of these experiments, are seen in *Par.* ii. 97-105. The phrase "falling of a stone in line direct," for the perpendicular, is said to have been first used by Albert the Great of Cologne, whose physical writings Dante had probably studied (*Par.* x. 98). The Italian *rifratta* seems to have been used for both the phenomena now distinguished as refraction and reflection. In this case it has the latter meaning. Dante had screened his eyes from the direct radiation of the angel's brightness. Now the rays met his gaze as reflected from the ground. As interpreted by what follows, we have, underlying the symbolism, the spiritual law that the inward eye can bear to gaze on the glory of heavenly things in proportion as it is purified from sin, just as in l. 36 there is the further truth that the victory over one form of evil renders the work of purification from others easier than before. The angels are represented at every stage of the Mount as rejoicing in the growing purity of the repentant souls, and meeting them with words of welcome and encouragement. So is there "joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." (*Comp.* C. xii. 88, xvii. 67, xix. 46, xxii. 1, xxiv. 136, xxvii. 55.)

"What then is this, sweet Father, whence in vain 25
 I seek to screen mine eyes as I desire,
 That seemeth now to move to us amain?"
 "Marvel thou not, if those of Heaven's high choir,"
 Then answered he, "still dazzle and confound;
 It is an angel, bidding men aspire : 30
 Soon to behold these things that here abound
 Will not be grievous, but a joy as sweet
 As Nature for thy power to feel hath found."
 When we the Angel ever-blest did meet,
 With joyful voice he said, "Come, enter in." 35
 On stair less steep than others for our feet
 We mounted thence, and, as we went therein,
 "Yea, Blessed are the Merciful" behind
 We heard them sing, "Rejoice ye, ye that win." 40
 I and my Master on our way did wind,
 We two alone, I thinking, as I went,
 Some profit good from words of his to find.
 And thus I spake to him and asked, "What meant
 That spirit from Romagna when he spake
 Of 'partners' and of that 'stern law's' intent?" 45
 Then he to me : "True measure doth he take
 Of his great failing : therefore marvel not
 If he chide it, men's pain the less to make.

³⁸ The beatitude of the Merciful points to the grace which, as it is the antithesis, is also the true remedy, of envy. The definitions of Cicero in this matter, "*Quemadmodum misericordia ægritudo est ex alterius rebus adversis, sic invidentia est ægritudo ex alterius rebus secundis*" (*Tusc.* 10), agree with those of Aquinas, "*Invidus tristatur de bono proximi; misericors autem tristatur de malo proximi*" (*Summ. P.* ii. 2, 36, 3). The other angelic utterance seems a kind of composite quotation, probably from some well-known anthem, like the constantly recurring "*Sancti et just, in Domino gaudete*," or "*Lætamini in Domino, et exultate just,*" of the Roman *Commune Sanctorum*, embodying the substance of *Rom.* xii. 21; *Matt.* v. 12; *Rev.* ii. 7.

⁴⁵ The poet's mind had been brooding over the words of Guido del Duca (*C.* xiv. 86, 87). He is taught to see that envy has its starting-point in the wrong deduction of our desires. When we seek earthly things, our share is diminished when others enter into partnership with us; not so when we seek heavenly things. There, in the words of Gregory the Great, the inheritance "*omnibus et una est, et singulis tota*" (*Mor.* iv. 31).

Because your wishes choose as happiest lot
 Where partnership doth make each portion less, 50
 To sighs hath envy, as the bellows, wrought ;
 But if the love of yon high sphere should bless
 Your souls, and raise your longings low on high,
 That fear would then no more your heart distress.
 For there the more each one 'our good' can cry, 55
 So much the more can each claim as his own,
 And in that convent burns more charity."
 "Far keener hunger," said I, "now I've known,
 Than if before my tongue had nothing said,
 And more of doubt within my mind hath grown. 60
 How can it be that good distributed
 Can with more wealth its many owners fill
 In its possession than if few it fed ?"
 And he to me : "Because thou fixest still 65
 Thy spirit only upon things terrene,
 From the true light thou darkness dost distil.
 That Good which passeth speech and bound, unseen,
 Which dwells on high, doth unto Love speed so,
 As to a body clear the ray serene.
 What heat it finds, so much it doth bestow, 70
 So that how wide so'er our charity,
 The Everlasting Might doth further flow.

57 The use of the term "cloister" to the company of saints is eminently characteristic (C. xxvi. 128 ; *Par.* xi. 99, xxv. 127). In spite of all corruptions and shortcomings the life of the monastery, in its ideal, was a foreshadowing of the life of Heaven.

61 The question reminds us of those of Nicodemus (*John* iii. 3, 9). Dante states apparently the difficulty which he had felt himself in order that it might be solved by others, and the solution is put into the mouth of Virgil, in order that it may be seen that human wisdom agrees on this point with the higher spiritual discernment, which is identified with Beatrice (l. 77).

67 God, as the Supreme Good, is light (1 *John* i. 5), and every soul that is capable of receiving that light is as a mirror (we note the evolution of the thought from the scientific law of ll. 16-21), which does not absorb but reflects it ; and so the greater the number of souls, the more is the light mirrored, and therefore multiplied, by and for each and all. Comp. the passage "*Chè solo Iddio . . .*" in the *Canz.* xvi. prefixed to *Conv.* iv. and *Conv.* iii. 12, 15.

And as the souls each other know on high,
 The more there are to love, and they love more,
 Each mirroring to each the radiancy. 75
 And if my thoughts to meet thy need seem poor,
 Thou shalt see Beatrice ; she shall still
 This and all other craving with her lore.
 But onward speed and seek with earnest will
 That like the two, the five wounds may be healed, 80
 Which close, when they their pain's due measure
 fill."

I fain had said, " Well hast thou this revealed,"
 But saw that I had reached another round,
 So that by restless eyes my lips were sealed.
 And there I seemed as in a dream profound, 85
 Ecstatic, to be plunged all suddenly,
 And in a temple many people found.
 And at the gate a lady fair, with eye
 And sweet mien of a mother, said, " My son,
 Why hast thou dealt with us thus cruelly ? 90
 Behold thy sire and I with many a moan
 Have sought thee sorrowing," and when she did
 cease,
 The vision which I gazed upon was gone.
 Then there appeared another ill at ease,
 And o'er her cheeks the tears of grief flowed
 down, 95
 As when men's scorn deprives us of our peace,

⁸⁰ The two vices are pride and envy ; the five that remain are wrath, sullenness (*accidia*), avarice, gluttony, and lust.

⁸⁵ The pilgrims find themselves in the circle of the Wrathful, where men are purified, as before, by examples, warnings, and beatitudes.

⁸⁷ The scene is, of course, that of *Luke* ii. 41-52. In the meekness and tenderness of the Virgin's words Dante sees the supreme instance of the triumph of meekness over the impulse which, under such circumstances, would have seemed natural.

⁹⁴ The next example is drawn, after Dante's manner, from a strangely different source. The story is found in Val. Max., *Facta et Dicta*, vi. 1. A young Athenian had kissed the daughter of Pisistratus in the street. Her mother went to her father and demanded the punishment of the offender, and was answered as in ll. 104-105.

And said, "If thou art Master of the town
 Whose name among the gods caused strife so great,
 From whence the light of knowledge far is thrown,
 On him take vengeance whose bold arm of late 100
 Embraced our daughter, O Pisistratus,"
 And then that Lord, with calm look and sedate,
 Seemed with a look controlled to answer thus:
 "What shall we do to those who seek our ill,
 If he we're loved by is condemned by us?" 105
 A multitude, whom flaming rage did fill,
 I then saw stone a youth, with clamour loud,
 One to another shouting, "Kill him! kill!"
 And I beheld him on his knees low-bowed,
 To earth bent down as heavy death drew near: 110
 But evermore his eyes as heaven's gates showed,
 And in that strife to Heaven's high Lord his prayer
 He poured that He his fierce foes would forgive,
 With such a look as unlocks pity's tear.
 But when my mind things outward did perceive, 115
 Which, being without, the mind accepts as true,
 I knew no false dreams did my soul conceive.

⁹⁸ The words refer to the strife between Neptune and Minerva, when the foundations of Athens were laid, as to which should be its tutelary deity (*Met.* vi. 70).

¹⁰⁷ Nothing is said in *Acts* vi. vii. as to the age of S. Stephen, but Dante followed the traditions of art, in themselves sufficiently probable. The first deacons were likely, at the time of their appointment, to be contrasted with the elders of the Church in age as well as office (*Luke* xxii. 26; *1 Pet.* v. 5).

¹¹¹ The words of *Acts* vii. 55 simply state that Stephen "saw the glory of God. . . ." Dante adds the thought that that glory and the image of Christ passed through the eyes into the heart.

¹¹⁴ Is the "compassion" that of God or man? The words point, if I mistake not, to the latter. It could hardly be said that not the prayer, but the face, of Stephen had moved God to pardon his chief persecutor. It might well be that the memory of that face, "as it were the face of an angel" (*Acts* vi. 15), worked towards that persecutor's conversion.

¹¹⁵⁻¹¹⁷ What had been seen was, as in a vision, true subjectively, yet having no objective reality. Such visions formed, we must believe, a frequently recurring element in Dante's life, and the picture of one walking as in a trance, staggering as oppressed by sleep or wine, is a touch of self-portraiture. What Virgil saw on the Mount might have been seen often on the streets of Verona or Ravenna. Bocc. (*V. D.*) reports an instance in

My Leader then, who saw me, full in view,
 Act like a man who wakens from his sleep,
 Cried out, "What ails thee, taking steps untrue ?" 120
 Nay, thou for half a league thy course dost keep
 Veiling thine eyes, and with thy legs entwined,
 Like one in wine or slumber fallen deep ?"
 "O my sweet Father, if my words thou'lt mind,
 I'll tell thee," said I, "what I deemed I saw, 125
 When my legs ceased their wonted use to find."
 And he : "If thou a hundred masks should'st draw,
 Over thy face, from me thou could'st not veil
 Within thy thoughts, however small, one flaw.
 What thou hast seen was that thou may'st not fail 130
 To streams of peace thine heart to open quite,
 Which from the Eternal Fount for all avail.
 I did not ask, 'What ails thee ?' as he might,
 Who looks with those eyes only which see nought,
 When reft of soul the body lies in night. 135
 Strength to thy feet was what my question sought :
 Thus must we spur the sluggards who are slack,
 When sight returns, to use it as they ought."
 Onward we went through twilight, with no lack 140
 Of forward glances keen, to penetrate
 Far through the radiant glow of sunset's track ;

which he stood entranced for hours without noticing even the stir and pageantry of a great procession.

131 The "waters of peace" are those which quench the fire of wrath, and they flow from the eternal fount of the love which is also peace. The phrase may have been intended to represent the *aqua refectiois* of the *Vulg.* of Ps. xxiii. 2.

136 Another touch of conscious self-portraiture. A man may, like Balaam, fall into a trance and see visions, and yet be none the better for them. Conscience, the higher self, speaking through Virgil, warns the poet that the "vision and the faculty divine" are given that they may lead to action. Apparently Dante had felt the fatal tendencies of the dreaminess of the poet's temperament.

141 We are startled at finding here, as in C. xvi. 1-6, a description which seems to belong rather to the poet's "Hell." In no other way, however, could Dante symbolise the fact that the passion of wrath darkens, even in the earlier stages of repentance, the soul's discernment, as of the things of Heaven, so also of the right relations of the things of earth.

And lo ! by slow degrees a smoke-cloud great
 Drew on towards us, as the night obscure,
 Nor was there place where we might find retreat :
 This reft us of our sight and fresh air pure. 145

CANTO XVI

*The Discipline for Anger—Marco the Lombard—Free Will
 and Man's Corruption—The Church and the Empire—The
 good Gherardo*

GLOOM as of hell and of a night bereft
 Of every planet under scanty sky,
 With nought unclouded by the dim gloom left,
 Ne'er laid so thick a veil upon mine eye,
 As did that smoke which covered us all o'er, 5
 Nor sackcloth e'er so rough the sense to try ;
 For I could look with open eyes no more ;
 Wherefore my Escort, wise and good and tried,
 Came near, and my hand to his shoulder bore.
 So, as a blind man walks behind his guide, 10
 Lest he should lose his way, and stumble on
 Aught through which hurt or death, perchance,
 betide,

¹ The opening words are deliberately chosen. To be conscious of wrath is to be in Hell, with all its blackness of darkness, its bitterness and foulness (l. 13). In the remedial methods which Dante depicts we may find that which he had found effective in his own experience. To keep close to the highest human wisdom in its calmness was something ; but the true remedy was found in the *Agnus Dei* which the worshipper heard at every Mass and Litany. It may be noted that in all masses for the departed "*Dona eis requiem*" took the place of "*Dona nobis pacem*." Here, however, as the souls pray for themselves, the latter form has to be read between the lines. Dante, we may well believe, had entered into the full meaning of those words as proclaiming the removal, not only of the penalty of sin, but of the sins themselves. Of all sins, that of anger was perhaps the most difficult for an Italian temper, with its tendencies to the proverbial *vendetta*, to overcome, and Dante's letter to Henry VII. against the Florentines and the immediately preceding Canto show how strong a hold it had on him, even about the time when he was writing this Canto.

I through that keen foul air my pathway won,
Heark'ning to my Guide's voice, which spake to me
But this: "Take heed I leave thee not alone." 15
Voices I heard, and each most piteously,
Appeared for mercy and for peace to pray
The Lamb of God, who all our sins puts by.
Still *Agnus Dei* led them on their way,
One word for all, for all one melody, 20
So that their song full concord did display.
"Do I hear spirits, Master?" then said I.
And he to me: "Thou rightly hast descried,
And thus they march till wrath's bonds loosened
lie."
"Who then art thou who didst our smoke divide, 25
And speak'st of us as though thou still wert there,
Where men by calends measure time and tide?"
Thus speaking to us we a voice did hear.
Whereon my Master said: "Make answer thou,
And ask if hence a path doth upward bear." 30
And I: "O Being, who dost cleanse thee now,
That fair to Him who made thee thou return,
Great marvel, if thou follow me, thou'lt know."
"Far as I may with thee I'll gladly turn,"
He answered, "and if smoke our sight arrest, 35
By hearing we in company shall learn."
Then I began: "In fleshly weeds still drest,
Which death dissolves, I take mine upward way,
And hither have I come through Hell's unrest;

²⁶ The spirits note, by the signs of the motion of the living body through the smoke and the tones of the living voice, that Dante is still in the flesh, in the life which is measured by the calends, nones, and ides, the months and days and years, which belong to time, but have no existence in eternity.

³⁹ As elsewhere, Dante declares the nature of his journey. He has been led through the anguish of Hell (the "if" is declaratory, not conditional) in ways which "modern usage" knew not, though there were records of a like pilgrimage in the case of Æneas and St. Paul (*H.* ii. 13), and in the visions of ancient monks and hermits, like Fra Alberigo and St. Brandan. The words imply that that kind of literature had gone out of fashion under the influence of the earlier Renaissance.

And if God in His grace the truth display, 40
 So that He wills that I His court shall see,
 In manner strange to this our later day,
 Hide not thy story ere death came on thee,
 But tell me that, and if the pass be nigh:
 So let thy words be as true guide to me." 45
 "A Lombard born, and Marco named was I;
 I knew the world, and did that true worth love
 Which slackened bows to hit no longer try.
 Straight on before thee lies the path above."
 So spake he, and then added: "Thee I pray, 50
 Pray thou for me when thou on high shalt move."
 And I to him: "In all good faith I say,
 I'll do what thou dost ask, but I am tried
 Within by doubt, until 'tis cleared away;
 First it was simple, now 'tis multiplied, 55
 By that thy speech which makes me well aware,
 Here and elsewhere, of what had doubt supplied.
 The world in sooth is desolate and bare
 Of every virtue, as thou tellest me,
 With evil big, and o'erlaid everywhere. 60
 I pray thee point out what the cause may be,
 That I may learn it and to others show;
 For some that cause in heaven, on earth some see."

⁴⁶ Marco, who belonged to Venice, is described as a Lombard, either because that term is taken as including all Northern Italy, or because he lived chiefly among the Lombard nobles. The name of his family is passed over in silence. Commentators report him to have been upright, noble, generous, but, as his presence in this circle of the Mount implies, easily moved to anger. He had, it was said, refused, when a prisoner, to purchase his freedom by soliciting his friends to pay his ransom. He may have been identical with the Marco whom Villani names as having warned Ugolino of Pisa (vii. 121). The wild conjecture which identifies him with Marco Polo, the Venetian (*Amp.* 133), is met by the fact that that great traveller survived Dante and died in 1323.

⁵⁷ Guido del Duca (C. xiv. 29) had spoken of the general corruption that prevailed throughout Italy. Marco (l. 48) had implied that few were striving after righteousness. What was the cause of the evil? The astrologers referred it to the adverse influences of the stars, others to the depravity of man's will. Which was right? or was there a truth on either side, and if so, in what relation did the two causes stand to each other?

First a deep sigh, "Ah me!" in bitter woe
 He breathed, and then began he: "Brother mine, ⁶⁵
 The world is blind; and thence thou comest so.
 Ye who live now the cause of all assign
 To Heaven above, as though necessity
 Moved all with it along predestined line;
 If this were so, then in your deeds would lie ⁷⁰
 Free will destroyed, and 'twere unjust to give
 Joy for good deeds, for evil, misery.
 Ye from the heavens your impulse first receive,—
 I say not all—but, granting that I say,
 Light too is given, or well or ill to live, ⁷⁵
 And free volition, which, although it stay,
 Faint in first fight with those star-destinies,
 Conquers at last, if trained in Wisdom's way.
 Ye to a better Nature, Might more wise,
 Though free, are subject: and that makes in you ⁸⁰
 The mind which is not subject to the skies.
 Hence if the present world take path undue
 In you the cause, on you the blame must rest:
 And now to thee will I be escort true.

⁶⁸ The answer to the question is embodied in words which present a close parallelism to Hom. *Od.* i. 33. There is no reason to suppose that Dante had read those words in the original, but he may have come across them in Aulus Gellius (*Noct. Att.* vi. 2). The main thought is, however, so natural, that it is scarcely necessary to refer the words to any earlier utterance. One who held, as a disciple of the Church's theology must hold, the freedom of man's will, could not admit a doctrine of Necessity which was fatal to it, and therefore to all the conceptions of Divine righteousness (Aquinas. *Summ. P.* i. 73, 1, 95, 4).

⁷³ Dante, as might have been expected from his other references to stellar influences (*H.* xv. 55; *Par.* xiii. 64, xxii. 112), takes an intermediate position, here also following Aquinas (*Summ. P.* ii. 95, 5). The planets do not act directly on the will, but they may impress certain tendencies on the human body, with its senses and affections, which in their turn affect, though they do not constrain, the will. Against those tendencies the will has a hard fight at first, but it gains strength in the conflict, and it is its own fault if it is not finally the conqueror. For that victory, however, it requires the nourishment of wisdom and of grace.

⁷⁹ Another element is brought into the question. If men are subject to the stellar influences, they are, in their freedom, subject also to the "greater might" of God, to the "better nature," which, mediately or immediately, through baptism or otherwise, they may claim as His gift to them. So Dante solves the problem which has vexed the souls of men through all

Forth from His hands whose acts His love attest, 85
 Ere yet it be, as child the soul is brought,
 Weeping and smiling, prattling and caressed,
 The soul so simple that it knoweth nought
 But this, that from a joyous Maker sprung,
 It turns to that which with delight is fraught. 90
 At first a small good tempts with savour strong,
 But it 'tis tricked and after it doth press,
 If guide or bit keep not its love from wrong.
 Hence laws must as a curb the will repress.
 A king we need, one who, at least, shall see 95
 That city's towers, where dwells true Righteousness.
 Those laws are there, but who doth them obey ?
 Not one; because the shepherd who presides
 But chews the cud; no cloven hoof hath he.

ages, and leaves men with the gift of freedom, and therefore the burden of responsibility. Throughout he follows Aquinas as Aquinas had followed Augustine (*Civ. D.* v. 1).

⁸⁵ Simple as the words seem, they embody the poet's solution of another of the mysteries of existence, another of the vexed questions of patristic and scholastic theology. He rejects, (1) the theory of traducianism, the generation of the soul by the same act as that which generates the body; (2) the theory that angelic powers created it. He refers its creation to an immediate act of God (Aquinas. *Summ.* i. 74).

⁸⁶ It would seem as if the image of sportive childhood which had suggested the comparison of C. xv. 1-3 was still present to the poet's mind. In this instance the similitude is happier. The new created soul is as an infant child, smiling that first smile which is the joy of the mother's heart, weeping also its first tears. As deriving its origin from the Giver of all joy, it turns to what has the semblance or reality of joy, is cheated by the semblance, and therefore needs the guidance which is supplied by laws and rulers, chiefly by the ideal King, the Emperor of the ideal polity (*Mon.* i. 12, 13). In the "nothing knows" of l. 88 we have the rejection of the Platonic doctrine of innate ideas balanced by the vague desires for the joy from which it has come forth, which reminds us of Wordsworth's ode on *Early Intimations of Immortality*. The comparison of l. 86 finds an interesting parallelism in the phrase of the Platonist Olympiodorus (Becker, *Anecd. Græc.* p. 1391, in *Scart.*), that the soul descends into the body at birth, *κορικῶς* = "after the manner of a maiden."

⁹⁵ The true city is, of course, the ideal polity of a Christian state (C. xiii. 95). The tower which the ruler should keep in view, even when he fails to discern the full proportions of the city of the Great King, is Justice as seen in the enforcement of righteous laws.

⁹⁷ The ever-recurring question, *Quid leges sine moribus vanae proficiunt?* comes to the poet's mind, and leads to the question, Whence comes that general neglect? The answer is at once in the highest degree both mediæval and Dantesque. The "Pastor" is the supreme Pontiff; but he belongs to the

And hence the people that beholds its guides 100
 Seek only the same good itself doth seek,
 Feeds on that only, asking nought besides.
 Well may'st thou see that guidance base doth speak
 The true cause that hath made the world go wrong,
 Not the corruption of thy nature weak. 105
 Rome once, when she to bless the world was strong,
 Was wont to have two suns that brought to sight
 The paths that to the world and God belong.
 This has quenched that; and now the sword doth
 smite,
 Joined with the crosier, and 'tis ill that they 110
 Should go together by sheer force of might;
 Since joined, this casts the fear of that away.
 If thou believe not, look upon the seed;
 For by their fruits all plants their kind display.

category of beasts which, according to the Mosaic law, were unclean, because they "chewed the cud" but did not "divide the hoof" (*Lev. xi. 3; Deut. xiv. 7*). The former act was in the exegesis of the Schoolmen the symbol of meditation, the latter of the power to distinguish dogmas such as the relation of the Father and the Son, of the Old and New Covenants (Aquinas, *Summ. i. 2, 102, 6*). Here the distinction which Dante has in view is that between the offices of the temporal and spiritual ruler. In its actions, therefore (also symbolised by the hoof), the Papacy confounds these offices, and the lower good takes the place of the higher. It thus becomes a temporal and worldly power, seeking after earthly good, and clergy and laity alike follow its example. This is the "evil guidance" to which, rather than to any stellar influences or malignity of nature, the prevailing corruption of Christendom is to be traced (comp. *Mon. iii. 15*).

¹⁰⁶ The poet looks back, as in *Conv. iv. 5, Mon. ii. 5*, to the early Empire, chiefly, perhaps, to the period of the Antonines, as a golden age. Then the Emperor ruled righteously in temporal things; the successor of S. Peter (*H. ii. 24*) exercised an independent authority over the Church in spiritual things. The donation of Constantine (*H. xix. 115*) had spoiled everything.

¹⁰⁷ The two suns are, of course, the Emperor and the Pope. The comparison presents a marked, probably a deliberate, contrast, to the ordinary Papal exegesis of the "greater" and "lesser" lights of *Gen. i. 16*, as representing the subjection of the Empire to the Church, from which it derived its authority. Not the sun and moon, but the two suns are the light of Christendom (comp. *Ep. vi. 2; Par. ii. 148 n.; Mon. iii. 1, 4*).

¹⁰⁹ So, in like manner, the symbolism of the pastoral staff and of the sword points to the distinction, not the union, of the two methods of Divine government, of which the Temporal and Spiritual Powers are respectively the representatives. A priesthood exempted from the jurisdiction of the civil ruler lost the restraint of a salutary fear. The civil ruler, in his turn, was in spiritual things to be subject to the Roman Pontiff as a first-born son to his father (*Mon. iii. 15*).

Where Po and Adige water every mead,
 Once courtesy and valour had their home,
 Ere Frederick came his quarrel there to plead.
 Now with full safety one that way may roam
 Who will abstain, as touched by sense of shame,
 From speaking with the good, nor near them come.¹²⁰
 True, three old men are left, whose lives throw blame
 From the old age upon the new, and slow
 God seems the better life to let them claim:

¹¹⁵ We enter on Dante's retrospect of the history of the previous century as an induction proving his position. Lombardy, Romagna, the Marca Trevigiana, described after Dante's manner (C. xiv. 92; *H.* xviii. 61), by their rivers, had, in the good old days of the emperors, from Barbarossa onwards, presented bright examples of a chivalrous life (C. xiv. 97-126; *Conv.* iv. 14). All had been ruined by the long conflict of Frederick II. with Honorius III., Gregory IX., and Innocent IV., and in that conflict each party, the Popes pre-eminently, had usurped an authority which belonged to the other. In contrast with that ideal excellence, the grave irony of the poet speaks (perhaps from personal experience) of the "safety" with which a man may travel to and fro in that region, subject only to the condition that he avoids the good who are like-minded with himself. The "good" are either the Ghibellines, or more probably those who, like Dante himself, shunned the falsehood of extremes (*Par.* xvii. 61-69).

¹²¹ The state of Northern Italy was, from Dante's view, as bad as that of the Cities of the Plain (*Gen.* xviii. 23-33). In Florence there had been two righteous men (*H.* vi. 73); in the whole of Lombardy and Romagna there are only three, and they are advanced in years, and desire only to be taken to the "better life" behind the veil. Conrad da Palazzo was of Brescia, of whom commentators (probably paraphrasing Dante) speak in highest terms. Two facts are worth noting: (1) that he bore the banner of his city, and, when both hands were cut off in battle, clasped it in his arms (*Benvenuto*); and (2) that in 1296 he was chosen as Podestà in Piacenza. Of Gherardo da Camino of Treviso we know, over and above the adjectives of commentators, something more from Dante's own pen. He is arguing in *Conv.* iv. 14 against what we should call the doctrine of heredity. "The grandfather of Gherardo was," he says, "one of the worst scoundrels that drank the waters of Sile and Cagnano (rivers of the Trevigiana). Gherardo himself was honoured in life, and his memory was honoured still." Assuming 1308 as the date of the *Conv.*, this would involve Gherardo's death between 1300 and 1307, and this leaves little or no room for a tradition reported in *Arriv.* 746, that Dante took refuge with him after his supposed quarrel with Can Grande. Other writers add that he was a patron of poets and men of letters (Barozzi, *Dante e suo Secolo*, p. 803), and that in 1295 he conferred knighthood on Azzo VIII. of Este at Ferrara (*Murat. Ann.* 1295). Guido da Castel of Reggio, honoured as the ruler and protector of that city, is named in *Conv.* iv. 16 as nobler than Alboin della Scala. He is said, but without adequate authority, to have been a writer of Italian poetry; to have been invited to the court of Can Grande to meet Dante; to have received the poet as his own guest. What is specially noted of him is that his fame had spread beyond his own countrymen, and that even the French, who had but one name for all Italians, spoke of him as the "simple

Conrado of Palazzo, Gherardo

The good, and Guido Castel, better styled 125
 The simple Lombard, as the French words go.
 Say henceforth that the Roman Church, beguiled
 To blend two governments distinct in one,
 Hath in the mire itself and them defiled."
 "O Marco mine," I said, "right well is shown 180
 The proof, and now I see why Levi's race
 Were left without a heritage, alone.
 But what Gherardo nam'st thou of such grace
 That he remains, as from a vanished age,
 To show a barbarous world its foul disgrace?" 135
 "Either thy speech deceives, or else would gauge
 My knowledge," said he, "that, with Tuscan
 tongue,
 Thou know'st not good Gherardo's lineage
 No other name I know to him belong,
 Unless his daughter Gaia one supply. 140
 God keep thee: I may not my course prolong.

Lombard." The *Rue des Lombards* in Paris, like our own "Lombard Street," is probably a survival of that old nomenclature. We note the adjective as having been used in C. vii. 130 of Henry III. of England.

128 The words embody the whole theory of the *De Mon.* The vice of the Papacy was that it insisted on absorbing the inherent rights of the Empire, confounded where it ought to have distinguished, and did not "divide the hoof." And so, in words which are reproduced from *V. E.* ii. 4, "it falls into the mire."

130 After the manner of his time, Dante reads his own theory into the rules of *Num.* xviii. 20, *Josh.* xiii. 14. The Levites had no tribal inheritance, but were left to depend for all beyond their dwellings on the tithes and offerings of the people, and the Christian priesthood ought to have followed their example. Comp. the same thought in C. xix. 115; *Mon.* iii. 10.

140 Of Gaia we have nothing but discordant guesses, assuming that she is stigmatised as the wanton, degenerate daughter of a noble father (*Beniv.*, *Ott.*, *Phil.*), that she is named as being, like him, a pattern of all womanly excellence (*Serrav.*, *Anon.*, *Fior.*, *Buti.*). The apparent strangeness of Dante's assumed ignorance of the man whom we only know through him probably represents two facts: (1) that he did not even know Gherardo's name in 1300; (2) that he was surprised when he knew him at the excellence which had neither sought nor gained popularity. This is his way of indicating the contempt for mere notoriety which is expressed in *Conv.* iv. 16.

Behold the dawn that gleams through dusky sky,
 E'en now grows bright, and I must needs depart,—
 Yonder the Angel comes—ere he draw nigh.”
 And he no more would hear, but walked apart. 145

CANTO XVII

*The Dream of the Passionate Ones—The Retrospect—The
 Fourth Circle—The Slothful*

BETHINK thee, Reader, if on Alpine height,
 A cloud hath wrapt thee, through which thou hast
 seen,
 As the mole through its membrane sees the light,
 How when the vapours moist and dense begin
 Themselves to scatter, then the sun's bright sphere⁵
 All feebly enters in the clouds between :
 And thus thy power of fancy will appear
 Swift to discern how I at first again
 The sun beheld, whose setting now was near.
 While with my Master's faithful steps were ta'en 10
 Mine own in measured pace, I left the cloud,
 For dying rays that fell on sea-washed plain.

¹⁴² The gleaming is not that of the sun—that could not penetrate through the dense smoke (C. xvi. 10)—but the brightness of the Angel of Peace, who is described more fully in C. xvi. 57.

¹⁴⁴ The soul was not allowed to appear before the angel until it had completed the full term of its purification.

¹ Another reminiscence of mountain travel, but the word “Alp” is to be taken in its generic sense of high pasture ground, and not as referring specially to the Alps of Switzerland or Savoy.

³ The belief in the blindness of the mole may have been derived from Aristotle (*Hist. An.* i. 9), or Pliny (*H. N.* xi. 52), or still more probably from Brun. Latini (*Tes.* ii. 64). A modern Italian naturalist, Savi of Pisa, has, it may be noted, found in the Apennines a mole in which the eye is so minimised that he has classified it as a new species, *Talpa caeca*. Dante, however, implies partial vision.

⁷ I follow most commentators in taking “leggiera” as conveying the sense of ease, not of difficulty.

¹² Virgil and Dante issued from the cloud, but it was near sunset, and the base of the Mountain was already shrouded in darkness.

O Power of Fancy, that full oft hast showed
 Thy spell to rob our sense, that we hear not
 Though round us thousand trumpets blare aloud, 15
 Who moves thee, if sense hath her power forgot?
 By light thou then art moved which heaven doth
 range,
Per se, or Will that doth its course allot.
 Of her transgression who her form did change
 Into the bird that most delights in song, 20
 Then in my fancy came the vision strange;
 And so my mind withdrawn by impulse strong
 Within itself, I failed to apprehend
 What else upon my outward sense did throng.
 Then on my high-pitched fancy 'gan descend, 25
 One on a cross, of scornful mood, with pride
 In look and mien, and so his life did end.
 The great Ahasuerus by his side
 Stood with Queen Esther, and just Mordecai,
 Who in all words and deeds was true and tried. 30

¹³ In this, as in C. xv. 115-123, we have a distinct self-portraiture. As in the story from *Bocc. V.D.*, there referred to (*n*), that state of ecstasy when the mind was dead to all impressions through the senses was an experience sufficiently familiar. The "thousand trumpets" seem to refer almost specifically to the military procession at Siena of which he, plunged in meditation over a book, was utterly unconscious. In such a trance-like state the soul receives its impressions either from the heavens *per se*, i.e., from stellar influences, or, as in the case of seers and prophets (and Dante would seem to class himself with that order), by a special act of God.

¹⁹ The story of the incestuous passion of Tereus, king of Thrace, the husband of Procne, for his wife's sister Philomela, of Procne's terrible revenge, and of the transformation of all three and of Procne's son Itys into birds, is told in full by Ovid (*Met.* vi. 412-676), and need not be repeated here. Ovid, it may be noted, leaves it uncertain which of the two sisters was changed into a swallow, and which into a nightingale. Greek writers for the most part identify Procne, and Latin writers Philomela, with the bird of song. Dante manifestly follows the Latin tradition. Procne served as an example of murderous hate. It is scarcely conceivable that Dante could have preferred the song of the swallow to that of the nightingale. Comp. C. ix. 13; Virg. *Ecl.* vi. 81; Arist. *Rhet.* iii. 3.

²⁶ The second example is that of Haman (*Esth.* iii.-vii.). The *Vulg.* represents him not as hung on a "gallows," but impaled or crucified, "*Et jussit excelsam parari crucem*" (*Esth.* v. 14), and this is the meaning of the *Heb.*

And as that image broke and passed away,
 Of its own motion like a bubble thin,
 When fails the moisture, whence it sprang, to stay.
 A maiden rose my dreaming thoughts within,
 Who wept with bitter tears, and said : " O Queen, ³⁵
 Why has wrath led thee 'gainst thy life to sin ?
 Not to lose me, Lavinia, thou hast been
 Self-slain : now thou hast lost me, mother mine ;
 Grief for thy fate above all else is keen."
 As sleep is broken, when new light doth shine ⁴⁰
 Upon the closed-up eye all suddenly,
 And broken quivers, ere it life resign,
 So vanished then mine airy phantasy,
 Soon as a beam upon my features fell,
 Far brighter than is wont to meet our eye. ⁴⁵
 I turned, that where I was I might see well,
 When a voice said : " Lo ! here the upward way,"
 And left no room for other thought to dwell,
 And made my will such eagerness display,
 To look upon his face that spake to me, ⁵⁰
 As, till 'tis met, can never tranquil stay.
 As at the sun which strains our power to see,
 And veils its true form in excess of light,
 So failed me then my vision's faculty.
 " A spirit this divine that gives us right ⁵⁵
 Direction in our way without our prayers,
 And with his glory hides himself from sight.

³² The dissolving views remind us of Shakespeare :—

" The air hath bubbles, as the water has,
 And these are of them."—*Macbeth*, i. 3.

³⁴ For the story of Amata, mother of Lavinia, who hanged herself in anticipation of the death of Turnus, and of Æneas becoming, in his place, her daughter's husband, see *Æn.* xii. 595, which Dante expands. In his epistle to Henry VII. Dante refers to it as a warning against yielding to selfish passions instead of accepting apparent evil for the sake of a greater good (*Ep.* vii. 7).

⁴⁵ The light is that of the Angel of Peace (C. xvi. 142), who points to the pass that leads to the next circle, and who is, in Milton's phrase, "dark with excess of light"; so dazzling in his glory that Dante cannot discern his form (l. 57).

For us, as man doth for himself, he cares,
 For he who waits for prayer, yet sees the need,
 With grudging spirit to deny prepares. 60
 Let us, thus summoned, onward now proceed,
 And haste to climb ere darkness falls apace,
 Else, till day come, our power were small indeed."
 Thus spake my Guide, and he and I our pace
 Quick turned to where a stairway mounted high ; 65
 Soon as I reached the first step's resting-place,
 I heard the whirr, as if of wings, float by,
 And fan me in the face, and utter "Blest
 Those who make peace, nor know malignity."
 E'en now so steeply upward in the West 70
 Struck the last rays whereon night follows swift,
 That far and wide above stars showed their crest.
 "O strength of manhood, why thus from me drift?"
 I said within myself, as feeling gone
 All power I had my limbs from earth to lift. 75
 We had come there where further rise was none
 Upon those steps, and so we halted there,
 E'en as a ship rests, when the shore 'is won.
 And while I listened so that I might hear
 Aught in the circle new that opened thence, 80
 Then said I, to my Master drawing near :

58 The words, general enough in their form, seem to point to some personal experience of disappointment, when Dante had hoped for help from one who saw his need, but waited to be asked and was then refused. It jarred on Dante's sensitiveness that he was compelled to solicit the cold hand of charity, and to solicit it in vain. Was he thinking of Henry VII.?

63 Line 12 had, it will be remembered, indicated the approach of night.

68 The salutation of the angel takes, as throughout, the form of one of the Beatitudes (*Matt.* v. 9). After the manner of Aquinas (*Summ.* ii. 2, 78, 1, 2, 3) and Gregory the Great (*Mor.* v. 30), Dante distinguishes between the righteous anger against evil as such, and the evil passion which has its root in selfishness.

75 Is this sudden sense of loss of strength symbolic of the new circle, that of Sullenness, or *accidia*, on which the pilgrim has now entered? or is it part of the law which Sordello had announced in C. vii. 53, 54, that law representing the spiritual truth that the soul needs an interval of rest, a "retreat," as it were, after conquering one form of evil, before entering on its conflict with another.

"O my sweet Father, tell me what offence
 Is cleansèd in this round where we're arrived ;
 Though our feet stay, stay not thine eloquence."
 And he to me : "The love of good, deprived 85
 Of its due power to act, is here restored,
 And the slow oar finds here swift stroke revived.
 But that thou may'st receive yet clearer words,
 Turn thou thy mind to me, and thou shalt gain 90
 From our delay fruit worthy to be stored.
 Nor ever God nor creature in His train,"
 So he began, "dear Son, was void of love,
 Be it of sense or soul ; this thou see'st plain.
 Sense never from its natural end doth rove ;
 The other may by evil object err, 95
 Or strength, below just measure or above.
 If to the chiefest good the will it stir,
 And in the second find proportion due,
 Its pleasure has no evil character ;
 But when it turns to ill, or doth pursue 100
 Good with more eager care, or less, than right,
 The thing made to its Maker works untrue.
 Hence thou canst judge how for you must unite
 In Love the seed of every excellence,
 And of each act that penalties requite. 105
 And since Love never turns its fixed gaze thence,
 Seeking the good of that wherewith 'tis one,
 Against self-hate all things have sure defence :

85 Dante's question is answered briefly. The sin of *accidia* is defined, nearly in the words of Aquinas (Greek *ἀκηδεια*=*securitas*=carelessness), as a spiritual sloth, the sluggishness of the soul in its love of good, "*Acedia ita deprimit animum hominis ut nihil ei agere libeat*" (Aquinas. *Summ.* i. 73. 2). But beyond that answer Dante seizes on the opening for a theological lecture, the "meditation" of the "retreat," such as he delighted in, and such as he had already given in *Conv.* iii. 1, iv. 22, on the nature of the love of good in its true and its perverted states. In this, after his manner, he follows Aquinas and Augustine, the latter of whom defines virtue as "*amor ordinatus*," vice as "*amor non ordinatus*" (*Civ. D.* xv. 22). Here the absence of that order is traced in its manifold developments. To substitute the lower good for the higher, to love the higher too little or the lower too much, leads to carelessness, to sensuality, to spiritual sloth. Comp. *Ozan.* p. 93.

108 The words are but an echo of *Eph.* v. 29, but, as given by Dante, are

And since we cannot deem that aught lives on,
 Self-centred, sundered from the Cause of all, 110
 Room in our hearts for hating Him is none.
 So it remains, if right my judgment fall,
 The ill we love is in our neighbour found,
 And triply may that love your clay befall ;
 There are who on their neighbour's ruin found 115
 Their hope of rising, and for this alone
 Would wish his greatness levelled with the ground ;
 There are who fear to see their power o'erthrown,
 Their honour, fame, and grace, by others' rise,
 And seek their damage to relieve their own ; 120
 And there are those so chafed with injuries,
 That they of vengeance are full greedy still,
 And such must needs their neighbour's harm desire :
 This threefold love is wept for down this hill.
 Now of the other I would have thee know, 125
 That follows good with passion ordered ill.
 Each dimly fixes on his good, that so
 His mind may rest, and this he will require,
 And therefore after this each man doth go.

probably introduced from Aquinas (*Summ. i. 2, 29, 4*). Even in the extremest cases of apparent self-loathing, as in suicide, the man is seeking, however blindly, what seems to him the good most within his reach.

109 In face of human experiences, recognised by Dante himself (*H. iii. 103, xxv. 3*), the dogma thus stated seems somewhat of the nature of a paradox. It is saved from that character, however, after the scholastic method, *distinguendo*. If men apprehend God, as indeed He is, as infinitely good, the source of all good for themselves and others, they cannot hate Him. It is only when they think of Him as acting in ways which are accidents, and not of the essence, of His being, as forbidding and punishing their ill-ordered desires of good, that their love passes into fear, and so into hatred (Aquinas. *Summ. i. 2, 34. 1*).

115 The ill-regulated affection, the object of which is the good that belongs to other men, is traced in its threefold working. There is the pride which desires the humiliation of others that it may glory in its own pre-eminence ; the envy which grieves at their prosperity as interfering with its own ; the vindictive wrath which is roused by acts that wound their self-love (Aquinas. *Summ. ii. 2, 36. 1, 162. 3*), and in all these instances the will is choosing, not evil as such, but evil which for the time seems good to the clouded intellect.

123 The phrase seems taken from Augustine, "*Fecisti nos, Domine, ad te et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te*" (*Conf. i. 1*).

If love be slow to that sight to aspire, 130
 Or to pursue, then doth this margin's round,
 After due penance purge each wrong desire.
 What other good there is leaves bliss unfound :
 It is not happiness, it is not good
 Essential, of all good both fruit and ground. 135
 Love, by that lower good o'ermuch subdued,
 Above us here bewails in circles three ;
 But how that triple order meets each mood,
 I tell thee not, that thou may'st seek and see."

Virgil's Doctrine of Love—The Slothful—The Abbot of San Zeno

THE great Instructor to its close had brought
 His reasoning high, and searched with eager gaze,
 Whether my face with full content were fraught ;
 And I, as spurred by thirst that nought allays,
 Without was mute, but said within, "Perchance, 5
 He grieves that I o'er many questions raise."
 But that true Father, seeing, at a glance,
 The timid wish that kept itself concealed,
 Speaking, gave my speech courage to advance.
 And I: "O Master, so my sight lives healed, 10
 In this thy light, that I discern full clear,
 Whate'er thy speech implies or hath revealed.

¹³⁷ The other tripartite forms of evil, rising out of an ill-regulated love for lower or counterfeit good, are avarice, gluttony, and lust, and these three are purified in the higher circles of the Mountain which the pilgrim still has to traverse.

¹ The subtle inner questionings of the poet are partly quieted, partly roused, by the dissertation of the previous Canto. What is that Love, the right or wrong direction of which is the cause, on the one hand, of all holiness, on the other, of all evil? Virgil has accordingly once more to appear in the character of an expounder of Aquinas.

⁶ We have what reads like a reproduction of what Dante had felt in actual

Wherefore I pray thee, gentle Father dear,
 That thou show me that love from whence arise
 All acts that good or otherwise appear." 15
 "Turn thou to me," said he, "the eager eyes
 Of thy keen spirit ; this will manifest
 The error of blind leaders, self-styled wise.
 The soul, that's made in love to find its rest,
 Is moved by all that comes in pleasure's hue, 20
 Soon as by pleasure it to act is press'd.
 Your power perceptive from some object true
 Impression draws, and it unfolds within,
 So that the soul it doth to gaze subdue ;
 And if thus turned, it bends itself to win, 25
 Love is that bending ; that is Nature's might,
 By pleasure new created, and bound in.
 Then, as the fire mounts upward to the height,
 By its own essence which is made to rise
 There, where on kindred matter it doth light, 30
 So the soul captive to its longing flies—
 The spirit's motion—and then rests knows none,
 Till the thing loved fruition full supplies.
 Now may appear to thee how little known 35
 Is truth unto those people who maintain
 That to all love *per se* may praise be shown ;
 Because perchance its substance praise may gain
 As always good ; yet not each seal's impress
 Is good, though good the wax itself remain."

converse with some honoured teacher. Was it a reminiscence of the days when he was content to sit at Brunetto Latini's feet? (*H.* xv. 85.)

¹⁸ The error of the blind leaders of the blind is that of the Epicureans, who contended that as man's desires naturally turned to good, every such desire must, *ipso facto*, be worthy of praise and therefore to be gratified (l. 36). Line 19 throws us back on the picture of the new-born soul seeking whatever gives delight (*C.* xvi. 86). That inclination is, however, consequent on the ideal picture which the mind forms to itself of what is likely to give pleasure. But that picture may, through the weakness of man's intellect, fail to correspond with the reality. The subjective good may not be identical with the objective. The "wax," *i.e.*, the desire for good, may be natural, and so far good in itself, but it receives a wrong impression from the seal of the imagination. Comp. *Witte* and *Phil. in loco*, and *Ozan.* p. 124.

"Thy language, and my following mind no less
 Behind thee," said I, "show me what is Love,
 But this begets in me more doubt's distress ;
 For if Love from without our mind doth move,
 And the soul moveth not with other feet,
 Then neither right nor wrong doth merit prove." 40
 And he to me : "What reason's sight doth meet,
 That I can tell ; beyond it thou must wait
 For Beatrice, faith's work to complete.
 Each form substantial, which is separate
 From matter, yet with it in union bound, 50
 In special virtue doth participate.
 This, without act, is still by sense unfound,
 And shows itself through its effects alone,
 As life in plant when green leaves spread around ;

41 In the dialogue between the Master and the Scholar we have a suggestive type of the scholastic disputations of a mediæval university, such as Dante may himself have taken part in at Paris or Oxford or Bologna. Comp. *Par.* xxiv., xxv., xxviii. If we cannot help loving, and therefore pursuing, the external object which our imagination pictures to us as conducive to our good, where does free will come in? What in that case is the function of the moral sense before action, or of conscience after it? Are we not shut up to a theory of determinism, *i.e.*, of necessity, which is fatal to human responsibility?

47 Virgil, as the representative of human wisdom, admits that he can offer but a partial solution of the problem of free will. That must come from Beatrice, as representing the supernatural light of a revealed wisdom, *i.e.*, as the theology which is the *Scientia Scientiarum*.

49 The soul is, in scholastic terminology, the "substantial form," *i.e.*, the essence, of man's nature. Without it the man is not. As such, it has its own specific virtue, *i.e.*, its own ideas, tendencies, and capacities. These are known in their effects, as the nature of the plant is known by its leaves and flowers and fruits, as the instinct of the bee is seen in its making honey; but what is the source either of the primal conceptions or the primal desires, whether innate, inspired, or determined by stellar influences or a law of heredity, Dante will not say. The first desires, even if directed to counterfeits of good, are simply neutral, deserving neither praise nor blame; but with them there is innate in the soul (here Dante is not doubtful, for with him it was a primary fact of consciousness) a power that judges, warns, advises—what we know as conscience. This stands as warder at the gate through which desire passes into act, brings with it the sense of merit or demerit, is the foundation of human liberty, and therefore of all systems of ethics which are worthy of the name, chiefly that of the "Master of those who know" (*H.* iv. 131; comp. *Mon.* i. 12). Hence, even if we allow that every desire in men may be traced to a law of cause and effect, and admit so far the postulates of Determinism, there is yet a "noble virtue" in man, which theology, embodied in Beatrice, recognises as keeping man from being bound hand and foot in the iron chain of necessity. Comp. *Par.* v. 19.

Wherefore in man must still remain unknown 55
 What is the source of first cognitions true,
 And how of things we seek desires have grown,
 Which, as the bee seeks honey, so in you
 Are found as instinct, and to this first will
 No merit or of praise or blame is due. 60
 Now since round this all others cluster still,
 Virtue innate that counsels, in you dwells,
 And o'er assent should watchman's part fulfil.
 This is the source, from which, as fountain, wells
 Merit's true cause in you, accordingly 65
 As it takes good or bad loves, or repels.
 They, who in reasoning did the depths descry,
 Perceived in man this liberty innate,
 So to the world they left Morality.
 Hence let us say that though each love may date, 70
 As from necessity, in you its rise,
 Yours is the power to guide and moderate.
 That noble power thy Beatrice describes
 In the free will ; seek therefore thou to know
 Thou hast it, if of it she thee advise." 75
 The moon, as though at midnight wandering slow,
 Shaped like a bucket all in fiery sheen,
 Made the stars few and feeble in their glow ;
 And moving 'gainst the heavens its course was seen,
 In paths the sun inflames when he of Rome 80
 Sees it go down 'twixt Corsi and Sardine.
 And that high soul who made of old his home,
 Pietola, than Mantua more renowned,
 Had made my doubts no longer burdensome.

⁷⁷ The moon was rising at or about midnight. Astronomical commentators range from 11 to 11.58 P.M., and it was, it will be remembered, the Paschal moon five days after the full. At that season the inhabitant of Rome (Dante was probably at Rome at the assumed date of the vision) sees the sun setting at a point through which a line would pass between Corsica and Sardinia. The moon was semi-globular or gibbous, like a bucket ; the stars paled before it. *A v. l.* "*scheggion*" gives "like a crag."

⁸³ Andes near Mantua, the birthplace of Virgil, identified with the mediæval Pietola.

Whence I, who to my questions now had found 85
 An answer that was manifest and plain,
 Stood like a man in dreamy slumbers bound.
 But from me soon that somnolence was ta'en
 Full suddenly, by crowd who then behind
 Our backs had turned, and on our steps did gain. 90
 As, where Ismenus and Asopus wind,
 Men saw of old by night wild tumult held,
 When Thebes had need for Bacchus to be kind,
 So on that circle, far as I beheld,
 Came on a troop with eager step who trode, 95
 By good will and a righteous love impelled.
 Soon they were on us, for upon their road
 With speed they ran, that whole crowd's wide extent,
 And two in front cried out, as tears down flowed :
 " Mary in haste unto the mountain went ; " 100
 And " Cæsar, firm Ilerda to subdue,
 Massilia crushed, to Spain his footsteps bent."
 " Haste, haste ! that time may not be lost by you,
 Through lack of love," forthwith the others cried,
 " That zeal in doing good may grace renew." 105

88 The "drowsiness" which reminds us of C. ix. 11, xxvii. 92, may in part be connected with the sin of *accidia* from which the pilgrim is now to be purified; in part perhaps with the weariness of the natural man after the tension of the brain-power on such profound mysteries. For him, as perhaps for us, it was a refreshment to come into contact with human feelings and experiences.

91 The comparison comes from Statius (*Theb.* ix. 434). Asopus and Ismenus are the two rivers of Thebes, along the banks of which rushed the processions of the worshippers of Bacchus with their wild orgiastic cries. Comp. Eurip. *Bacch.* The speed of the souls that draw near shows that they have already in part conquered their besetting sin.

100 As elsewhere, the examples which are the spurs of action are drawn both from sacred history (*Luke* i. 39) and from secular. The reference to Cæsar comes from Lucan (i. 151, iii. iv.). The motive of selection in each case was that each was unconsciously looking towards the manifestation of Dante's ideal of a perfect polity as seen in the right union of the Empire and the Church of Christ (*Mon.* iii. *ad fin.*; *Weg.* 522). Ilerda, now Lerida, was the scene of the battle in which Cæsar defeated the two generals of Pompeius, Afranius and Petreius.

105 I have taken "grace" as the object, not the subject of the sentence, but the words admit of either rendering. What Dante seems to teach is the scholastic doctrine of "grace of congruity," *i.e.*, that the efforts of men to do good are effective in making them meet to receive grace for doing it.

"O ye, in whom keen will intensified
 Atones perchance for slackness and delay,
 When your good deeds by lukewarm soul were tied,
 This living man—and here no lie I say,—
 Seeks, if the sun relight us, to ascend : 110
 So tell us where the pass yields nearest way."
 These were the words of him, my Guide and Friend.
 And one of those same spirits said, "Come near
 Behind, and to the opening thou shalt wend.
 So strong our will a forward course to steer, 115
 We cannot stay ourselves, so pardon thou,
 If this our duty rudeness should appear.
 I, at Verona, took St. Zeno's vow
 As Abbot, under Barbarossa brave,
 Of whom in sorrow Milan speaks e'en now ; 120
 And one there is with one foot in the grave,
 Who shall ere long that monastery rue,
 And in his power there find a burden grave,

The doctrine is condemned by the Church of England in Art. xiii., which teaches to recognise God's grace even in those efforts.

114 The souls of the sullen, now so quick to move, are moving under the moonlight from left to right. They cannot stop, and have to apologise for the seeming want of courtesy to which they are led by their new-born righteousness, *i.e.*, by their desire to meet the requirements of the Divine righteousness.

118 Who the abbot was we are left to guess. The early commentators name an Alberto, but no such name is found in the records of the Abbey of St. Zeno in Barbarossa's reign (1152-1190). The chief abbot of that time was a Gherardo (*d.* 1178), who was invested by the Emperor with jurisdiction over many villages near Verona; but the few facts recorded of him, his restoration of the church and the erection of a new campanile, seem to speak of activity rather than sloth. From his studies of Veronese history, Dante perhaps knew, while at the Court of Can Grande, more of his inner life, and wished to point the moral that there may be spiritual sluggishness in the midst of outward diligence.

119 There seems no reason for taking "good" as ironical, as many have done. From Dante's standpoint Barbarossa embodied the imperial ideal, was brave, chivalrous, and, in many things noble; and even the cruelty with which he treated Milan and Cremona would seem to the poet little more than a righteous judgment on their rebellion against a Divine order. Comp. the Epist. to the Florentines.

121 Here the commentators are for once agreed. The prophetic words speak of Alberto della Scala (*d.* 1301). He had three legitimate sons, Bartolommeo (*d.* 1304), Alboin (*d.* 1311), and Francesco, better known as Can Grande, and besides these a bastard son Giuseppe, whom he made Abbot of St. Zeno (1291-1314) to the great injury of the discipline and reputation of

Because his son, in body foul to view,
 And worse in mind, and illegitimate, 125
 He hath set up in place of shepherd true."
 If more he said, or ceased, I cannot state,
 So great a space already lay between ;
 But this I heard and gladly now relate.
 And he who in all need my help had been, 130
 Said, " Turn thou this way, and behold these two
 Putting sharp bit on coward souls and mean."
 In rear of all they cried, " That wretched crew
 To whom the Red Sea opened, all were dead,
 Ere Jordan might the heirs of promise view ; 135
 And they who from the toil and trouble fled,
 Nor with Anchises' son endured the end,
 Passed to a life on which no fame was shed."
 Then, when apart from us those souls did wend
 So far from us, we saw their face no more, 140
 A new thought in my spirit 'gan ascend ;
 From this were others born of diverse race,
 And so from this to that I rambled on,
 That wandering thus mine eyelids closed apace,
 And I to dream changed meditation. 145

the monastery, and, as Dante intimates, to his own infinite loss. The chronicle reports many acts of violence and outrage on the part of the abbot, some describing him as only "*semisanus*" with something of the insanity of Caligula. The mere fact of his illegitimacy ought to have been, by the Canon law, a bar to his promotion. He himself left a natural son who was Abbot of St. Zeno in 1321, and afterwards Bishop of Verona. The question naturally rises whether these words ever came to the knowledge of Can Grande, Dante's protector, the hero of *H.* i. 101, and *Par.* xvii. 71, and whether they were written before or after Dante's traditional quarrel with him.

133 As before, examples are followed by warnings. The Israelites who came out of Egypt (comp. *C.* ii. 46) perished through their coward sloth, and did not enter on the inheritance of Canaan (*Num.* xiv. ; *Deut.* i. 26-36 ; *Heb.* iii. 15-19). Many of the companions of Æneas chose to remain in Sicily with Acestes (*Æn.* v. 746-761), and so forfeited their share in the inheritance of Italy. They chose safety rather than glory, and that was the essence of the sin of *accidia*.

141 The picture that follows is another instance of self-portraiture. Thought crowds on thought till at last the stage of ecstasy is reached, and there comes the vision with which *C.* xix. opens. It is noticeable that in this circle alone there is no request for the intercessory prayers of others.

*The Dream of the Siren—The Angel of the Fifth Circle—The
Lovers of Money—Pope Hadrian V.*

It was the hour at which day's heat doth fail
 Longer to warm the coldness of the moon,
 When o'er it Earth's or Saturn's chills prevail,
 When geomancers see their Great Fortune
 In the far East before the break of day,
 Rise by a path still dim, to brighten soon ;
 I saw in dreams a woman pass that way,
 Stammering, cross-eyed, and with misshapen form,
 Who did maimed hands and pallid face display.
 I looked on her, and as the sunbeams warm
 The stiff cold limbs which were benumbed by night,
 So then my gaze her tongue to speak did charm,

Is there an implied retribution in this omission? Were they who had been so negligent and apathetic on earth, now to "dree their weird," unaided by the sympathy of others?

¹ The hour at which dreams are true (C. ix. 18; *H.* xxvi. 7) is defined, after Dante's manner, as that at which the night temperature attains its *maximum* of cold. The moon and Saturn were supposed to radiate cold, as also was the earth, after it had parted with the heat absorbed during the day from the sun. It was, *i.e.*, just before daybreak.

⁴ The words refer to an elaborate system of divination, which consisted in marking sand or paper at random with an indefinite number of dots, which were then formed, according to certain rules, into sixteen squares, the dots in which received their names according as they approximated more or less closely to the figures of certain constellations. The "greater fortune" was that in which the dots represented the position of the stars in Aquarius and Pisces, or possibly those of Ursa Major (*Phil.*).

⁷ The form which appears in the poet's vision is defined in l. 19 as that of the Siren, in l. 58 as that of the "ancient sorceress," who represents the sins which remain to be cleansed in the upper circles of the Mount, *i.e.*, the love of lower good, as seen in avarice, gluttony, and lust. The vision seems in part a reproduction of *Prov.* vii. 10-12, the distorted eyes, the bent form, the crippled hands, the extreme pallor corresponding to the physiognomic signs of those evil passions.

¹⁰ The transformation which follows on the poet's gaze, the flush of "celestial rosy red, love's proper hue" (Milton, *P. L.* viii. 619), which comes over the pallor, the free speech which takes the place of the stammering tongue, set forth the danger of tampering with the first impressions made by evil on our better nature. Vice becomes attractive because, and in proportion as, we gaze on it. Pope unconsciously reproduced Dante when he wrote—

"Vice is a monster of such hideous mien
 As to be hated needs but to be seen.
 Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
 We first endure, then pity, then embrace."

Ess. on Man, ii. 219-223.

And made her soon stand up with form upright,
 As in a moment, and her pallid face,
 As Love would wish it, rosy grew and bright. 15
 And when her speech, thus loosened, flowed apace,
 She poured out song so sweet, that I with pain
 Had turned my thoughts from dwelling on her grace.
 "I the sweet Siren am," so ran her strain,
 "Whose spells bewilder sailors in mid-sea ; 20
 So sweet to him who hears is my refrain.
 Ulysses changed his course to look on me,
 Lured by my song, and who by it is won
 Is slow to leave, so full content is he."
 Her lips were not yet closed, her song not done, 25
 Before a saintly lady fair drew near,
 On her to pour extreme confusion.
 "O Virgil, Virgil ! whom behold I here?"
 Sternly she said ; and then he nearer came 30
 With eyes full fixed upon the nobler fair.
 That other one he seized and put to shame,
 Laid bare her body, stripping every shred ;—
 The stench woke me that issued from the same.

¹⁹ The comparison implies a knowledge of the story of Ulysses as told in *Od.* xii. 39-54. The Sirens of Greek mythology were the daughters of Melpomene and Achelous, deriving their gift of song from the former. Possibly, as Dante had probably not read Homer, he thinks of Circe as one of the Sirens. Those whom Homer names as such had not turned Ulysses and his companions from their course.

²⁶ The "holy lady" who appears to rescue Dante from the evil fascination of the Siren is obviously the symbol of the Wisdom of *Prov.* viii. 1, of the true blessedness which exposes all counterfeits, possibly, therefore, like the Lucia of *C.* ix. 55, and *H.* ii. 97, of the grace of illumination. The whole scene reminds us of the choice of Hercules as told in *Xen. Mem.* ii. 1, 11 ; *Cic. de Off.* i. 32, from the latter of which Dante probably derived his imagery. Comp. also *Boeth.* i. 1.

²⁸ The words imply reproach, as though Virgil had been guilty of some negligence in permitting his scholar to come within the range of the Siren's fascinations.

³¹ The description that follows is somewhat shocking to the delicacy of modern refinement ; but Dante had studied in the school of the Hebrew prophets, and his words are but as an echo of *Isai.* iii. 24 ; *Ezek.* xvi. 37, xxiii. 10. Men must learn to see in evil a foulness that they loathe, that literally "turns their stomach." With that nausea the dream ends, the spell of the illusion is broken.

I turned mine eyes, and my good Virgil said,
 "Thrice have I called thee : rise and come this way ; 35
 Find we the door by which thy path to tread."
 I rose, and now irradiate with full day
 Were all the circles of the sacred Mount,
 And the new sun behind us poured its ray.
 And following him I went with bended front, 40
 As one who is by care's sore burden bound,
 And bends, as half-arch of a bridge is wont,
 When I heard : "Come ; lo ! here the pass is found,"
 Spoken in tone so sweet and so benign,
 As doth not in our mortal country sound. 45
 With open wings, which like a swan's did shine,
 Upward he led us who to us thus spake,
 Where the two granite walls the path confine.
 He moved his wings, and fresh breeze on us brake,
 Affirming those *qui lugent* to be blest, 50
 For now their souls shall sovran comfort take.
 "What ails thee, with thy looks to earth deprest ?"
 Began my Guide to say to me, when we
 Had somewhat passed the Angel there at rest ;
 And I : "Such dark misgivings come on me 55
 From the new vision which absorbs me so,
 I cannot from its contemplation flee."

³⁴ The MSS. vary between "*e mentre voci*" (verb) and "*almen tre voci*" (noun). The latter seems preferable.

³⁷ An hour or more had passed during the dream, and it is now broad daylight on the morning of Easter Tuesday, March 29th. The sun is behind the travellers as they move onward to the west, towards the fifth circle of the mountain.

⁴⁰ Another touch of self-portraiture. "*Andò alquanto curvetto*" (Bocc. *V. D.*) "*Curvatis aliquantulum renibus incedebat*" (Vill. *V. D.*).

⁴⁵ The voice is that of the angel who points out the passage by which they are to ascend. Dante uses *marca* (= Goth. *mark*) in the sense of region, as in the "*Marca Trevigiana*."

⁴⁸ The two granite walls symbolise probably the strength and constancy, which the pilgrim needs in his conflict with temptation.

⁵⁰ The beatitude of *Matt.* v. 4 proclaims the victory over the sin of *accidia* or sloth, that has its root in man's shrinking from the pain of effort. He who accepts that pain shall be comforted ; his soul shall be mistress of every true element of consolation.

⁵⁵ The dream still fills the pilgrim's mind with vague apprehension.

"Thou hast beheld," said he, "that old witch foe,
 Whose work alone above us causes pain :
 How man escapes her, this thou too dost know. 60
 Let this suffice ; now tramp along amain ;
 Look upwards to the lure the Eternal King
 Whirls in the great sphere of His mighty reign."
 Like falcon that its glance below doth fling,
 Then turns him to the call, and forward darts, 65
 Through strong desire for food, with eager wing,
 So acted I, and where the hard rock parts,
 To open path for him who mounts above,
 I went to where it for its circuit starts.
 In the fifth circle where I now did move, 70
 I saw a people weeping very sore ;
 Prostrate, with face that ne'er from earth did rove.
 "*Adhæsit pavimento*" evermore
 I heard them say with such oppressive sighs,
 Scarce knew I what the words they muttered o'er. 75
 "O chosen ones of God, whose miseries
 Justice and hope both render less severe,
 Direct us where the high steps upward rise."

Virgil, like Daniel, knows both the dream and its interpretation (*Dan.* ii 19-45). The sorceress represents the counterfeit show of good that leads to the threefold sin of the remaining circles. Man is emancipated from her spells by seeing her in all her foulness.

⁶² Another image from the art of falconry. Comp. *H.* xvii. 127, xxii. 130 ; *Par.* xix. 34. The counter-attraction to the charms of vice is found in the beauty and glory of the heavens, *C.* xiv. 148-150. With this to give quickness to his footsteps, as the falcon who, from his perch or from his master's wrist, spreads his wings to fly towards his prey, the pilgrim mounts to the fifth circle. Comp. the Emperor Frederick II., *De Arte Ven.* ii. 60.

⁷¹ As in *H.* vii. 25-66, the prodigal and the avaricious are grouped together as exhibiting different aspects of the same evil. On earth their looks, like those of Milton's Mammon (*P. L.* i. 681), have been ever "downward bent," and their penance is to lie prostrate on the earth, uttering the words of *Ps.* cxix. 25. Those words form part of the service of Prime in the *Rom. Brev.*, and it was at this hour (l. 2) that Dante hears them in Purgatory. Comp. *C.* viii. 13, ix. 140, for a like correspondence. We may call to mind the concluding words of that verse, "Quicken Thou me according to Thy word."

⁷⁶ As before, in *C.* iii. 73, xiii. 143, Dante speaks to the souls in Purgatory in words that are full at once of courtesy and comfort. Such should be the tone of every soul seeking its own purification towards others who are under a like discipline for like sins.

"If ye as free from bowing down come here,
 And wish to find the quickest onward way,
 Let your right hands still outward turned appear." 80
 So questioned them the Poet, and so they
 Made answer in advance of us, and I
 Marked, as they spoke, the one who hidden lay,
 And to my Lord and Master turned mine eye. 85
 And then he granted with glad look and mien
 That which my glances asked for wistfully.
 And I, when power to act had granted been,
 Drew myself on, above that creature there,
 Whose words had made me note him yet unseen, 90
 And said: "O soul in whom thy tears prepare
 That without which we cannot turn to God,
 Stay for my sake awhile thy greater care.
 Who wast thou, and why thus your backs are showed,
 Tell me, I pray, and if thou wilt that I 95
 Thither bear aught whence living late I strode."
 And he to me: "Why thus towards the sky
 Our backs are turned, thou'lt learn; but I disclose
 First that *successor Petri* once was I.

79 The speaker is, as we learn from l. 99, Pope Hadrian V. He assumes that the questioner who asks the way to the sixth circle has no need of the discipline of prostration, and tells them to go on, turning ever to the right.

84 Commentators involve themselves in much perplexity as to the other "hidden" person or thought. Was it hidden in Dante's mind or that of the speaker? Was it that the latter did not know that the pilgrim was still living, or that the former did not know who the speaker was? The last seems the most probable solution of the problem. Comp. ll. 95, 96.

86 The pilgrim and his guide interchange glances, and the hints of the latter tell the former that he may gratify his thirst for further knowledge.

92 The condition of turning to God is, of course, a true and earnest repentance. That is the "greater" care which Dante asks the soul to suspend for a brief moment that he may learn who he is, and, it may be, help him by his own prayers or by commending him to those of others.

99 The speaker is Ottoboni Fieschi, of Genoa, elected Pope as Hadrian V., July 12, 1276, who died at Viterbo on August 3rd of the same year. Sestri and Chiaveri are two towns of the Eastern Riviera which were subject to Genoa. The river is the Lavagna, from which the Fieschi family took their title as counts. Hadrian died before his admission to the priesthood, and therefore was neither consecrated nor crowned as Pope. Dante, speaking probably from his knowledge of family traditions (l. 142), represents him as having had his eyes opened by the responsibilities of his high position to the evil love of money which had been the canker of his past life.

Between Siestri, and Chiaveri flows 100
 A river fair to look on, and its name
 Upon my lineage highest lustre throws.
 For one short month the knowledge to me came,
 How the great robe loads him who keeps it white,
 So that all else as light as down became. 105
 Full late, ah me! my turning to the light!
 But when they made me Shepherd of great Rome,
 Life's falsehood then came clearly into sight.
 I saw that thence no rest of heart could come,
 Nor could it in that life mount up more high, 110
 So Love burnt in me here to seek my home.
 Up to that point full wretched soul was I,
 And severed from my God, the prey of greed:
 Now as thou see'st, I pay the penalty.
 What Avarice works is here made clear indeed 115
 In this purgation of souls penitent:
 No sin in all the Mount reaps sharper meed.
 E'en as our eye was never upwards sent,
 But ever fixed upon the things of earth,
 So justice here our forms to earth hath bent. 120
 As Avarice quenched our love for all true worth
 Of goodness, whence our labour all was waste,
 So Justice keeps us bound in tightest girth,
 Fetters our feet and hands, by chains embraced;
 And long as it shall please the righteous Sire, 125
 Shall we our pain, unmoved and stretched out, taste."
 I knelt to him as one who would inquire,
 But e'en as I began, and he was 'ware,
 Through listening, of that homage of desire:

Precisely at the highest position which life could offer, he discovered that it was "vanity of vanities." As his conversion came thus late, he must have spent some years in the *Ante-Purgatorium*, shortened possibly by the prayers of Alagia and others who loved his memory. In the fact that he had been sent by Innocent IV. in 1268 as a legate to reconcile the King, Henry III., and his barons, and to reform abuses in the Church, we have a point of contact with our own history (*Lingard*, iii. 2; *Milm. L. C.* vi. 409).

¹¹⁸ See note on l. 71 for the law of retribution here stated.

"What cause," said he, "hath bent thee downward there?" 180

And I to him: "For that thy dignity,
My conscience did correction sharp prepare."

"Straighten thy legs and rise," he made reply.
"O brother, err not; to one mightier Power
With thee and others, fellow servant I. 135

If thou those words hast heard at any hour,
Which *Neque nubent* in the Gospel sound,
Thou well may'st see how thus my thoughts I pour.

Now go thy way; I would not stay thy round;
Thy tarrying here my weeping doth delay, 140
Wherewith I ripen what thy words expound.

My niece Alagia yet on earth doth stay,
Good in herself, unless our heritage
By bad example led her too astray;
She only lives of all my lineage." 145

¹³³ Hadrian has learnt the lesson of *Acts* x. 26, *Rev.* xix. 10, xxii. 9. Another note of humility is that, instead of using the customary formula of Popes in addressing others, as "My son," he speaks to Dante as a brother.

¹³⁶ The words point to a somewhat subtle reason for the renunciation of Papal dignity. The Pope was the spouse of the Church (*C.* xxiv. 22; *H.* xix. 56), but the ties of that, as of other marriages, are dissolved by death (*Matt.* xxii. 30). The Papacy was not like the priesthood, which impressed on the soul, in scholastic language, a *character indelibilis*.

¹³⁹ Dante has spoken (*l.* 92) of the soul's return to God. The repentant soul wishes that no further converse may delay that return.

¹⁴² Alagia, wife of Moroello Malaspina, was the daughter of Hadrian's brother, Niccolo Fieschi, and this was perhaps the reason of the special mention made of her, of Currado Malaspina (*C.* viii. 118; *H.* xxiv. 145), of Lunigiana, and of her husband, Dante's friend and protector, to whom he is said to have dedicated his *Purgatorio*. From her he probably learnt the story of her uncle's conversion.

¹⁴⁴ Two possible reasons have been assigned for this general condemnation: (1) that the Fieschi were, as a rule, on the Guelph side in politics: (2) that one of them who was appointed Vicar-General of Florence by the Emperor Rodolph in 1287, had inflicted on its citizens a fine of 60,000 marks (*Vill.* vii. 112). Probably, however, the words hint at the misconduct of other women of the Fieschi family, which led Hadrian to desire no other prayers than those of Alagia. The words, if written, as is probable, while Alagia was living, are at once a subtle praise and a yet more subtle utterance of hate.

*Examples of Holy Poverty—The Story of Hugh Capet—The
Evil Kings of France—The Trembling of the Mountain*

ILL fights our will against a will more true ;
Wherefore, against my pleasure, him to please,
I from the water sponge unfilled withdrew.
I moved, my Teacher also moved, where ease
Of access met us, by the rough rock's face, 5
As on a wall, we near the rampart squeeze.
For on the outer side too near, the race
Was seen who still shed, drop by drop, in tears,
The ill which doth the whole wide world embrace.
Accurst art thou, thou wolf of ancient years, 10
Who hast far more than other beasts thy prey,
Through hunger vast to which no end appears :
O Heaven, by whose revolving course some say
In this our earthly state doth change ensue,
When will He come who'll chase her far away? 15
Onward we went with footsteps slow and few,
And I, upon those souls around intent,
Heard them their moans and wailing still renew,
And heard by chance their cry, "Sweet Mary," sent
Before us, as they wailed, and made their moan, 20
Like woman in her pangs of travail bent.
And in continuance came, "Full well was known
How poor thou wert by that low hostelry
Where thou didst lay thy holy burden down."

¹ The "better will" of Hadrian to complete his purification prevails over Dante's desire to know more.

⁵ The pathway which the pilgrim takes is like one on the wall of a city, on which the travellers keep close to the battlements to avoid falling. They pass by those who, like Hadrian, are suffering from the sin which of all sins had the widest range of evil. The "wolf," as in *H. i. 49*, is avarice.

¹³ Dante seems to accept the notion of stellar influences as affecting the order of events as at least a probable opinion (*Par. xiv. 67*). Line 15 is a sigh for the coming of the *Veltro*, the greyhound of *H. i. 101*. Who shall chase the wolf away? It implies the feeling that as yet neither Uguccione, nor Moroello, nor even Can Grande, had accomplished that work. The cry of the idealist reformer is still "How long, O Lord, how long?" (*Rev. vi. 10.*)

²¹ As elsewhere, a floating voice teaches the lessons that the avaricious

And next, "O good Fabricius" came the cry, 25
 "Thou didst choose virtue with a poor estate
 Rather than guilt with great wealth's pageantry."
 These words to me brought pleasantness so great
 That I went on, more converse so to hold
 With that soul whence they seemed to emanate. 30
 He then the tale of generous bounty told
 Which Nicolaos to the maidens gave,
 To keep their youth within pure honour's fold.
 "O soul, who speakest words so good and brave,
 Say who thou wast," I said, "and why alone 35
 Thou dost renew those praises high and grave?
 Nor shall thy speech unrecompensed be shown,
 If I return, the brief path to complete
 Of this our life which to its goal speeds on."
 And he: "I'll tell thee, not for comfort sweet, 40
 Which thence I hope for, but because in thee
 Such great grace shines ere thou with death dost meet.
 I was the root of that ill progeny
 Which so o'erclouds the face of Christendom,
 That seldom good fruit gathered there we see. 45

need, and the first is found in the poverty of the Virgin and the stable of Bethlehem.

²⁵ Fabricius C. Luscinus, whose whole life was a protest against greed of gain, who, as Censor, had banished P. Cornelius Rufinus for his luxury and prodigality, who refused the gifts offered him by the Samnites, and died so poor that he had to be buried at the public cost, was clearly one of Dante's heroes (*Conv.* iv. 5; *Mon.* ii. 5, 10), as he had been one of Virgil's (*Æn.* vi. 844).

³² The story of S. Nicolas, Bishop of Myra in Lycia (*circa* 325), held in especial honour at Bari, which boasted of possessing his remains, was that he, learning that a father who had three daughters was tempted by extreme poverty to expose them to a life of dishonour, went by night and threw into the window of his house three bags of money which served as a marriage portion for each, and thus rescued them from shame. Aquinas refers to the story, *Summ.* ii. 2, 107. 3.

⁴⁰ The words have been differently explained as meaning either (1) that the speaker, who is identified in l. 43 with Hugh Capet, the founder of the dynasty of French kings, had passed beyond all care for earthly fame, or (2) that he had no hope of any availing prayers from his descendants, or (3) that the appointed time of his cleansing had nearly come, so that he had no need of earthly prayers. Of these (3) seems the most probable.

⁴³ The words that follow embody the concentrated hatred which the poet felt for the kings of France, and the evil they had wrought in the world.

But if to Douay, Bruges, Ghent, Lille should come
 The power to act, on it would vengeance fall :
 May the great Judge of all drive that blow home !
 Me as Hugh Capet men of old did call,
 From me the lines of Philips, Louis' run, 50
 Who in late days in France have governed all.
 I of a Paris butcher was the son :
 What time the line of ancient kings gave way,
 Save one reduced the garments grey to don.
 Fast in my hands I found the reins that sway 55
 The government of kingdoms, and such power
 Of new acquist, and friends in full array,
 That to the crown, left widowed in that hour,
 My son's head was promoted, and from thence
 Those bodies sprang that claimed the sacred dower. 60
 Till the great appanage of fair Provence
 My lineage had deprived of sense of shame,
 Small was their power, but no ill-deed sprang thence.

Of these he notes (1) the treatment of the four cities named in l. 46 by Philip the Fair, who in 1297 had attacked Guy, Count of Flanders, then in alliance with Edward I. of England, who, under a treaty with Charles of Valois, came with his two sons to Paris and was thrown into prison. This was followed by measures of extortion and cruelty under which Bruges was the chief sufferer. The vengeance in the implied prophecy of l. 48 was found in the battle of Courtray, in which the French were defeated by the Flemish.

⁵² Dante follows the popular tradition, recorded also by Villani (iv. 4), and widely received both in France and Italy. As a matter of history, however, Hugh Capet was descended from a noble line of Counts of Paris and Dukes of France. Possibly the legend arose out of the fact that his father, or he himself, had been described as a butcher on account of the severity of his punishments.

⁵³ The ancient kings are the last descendants of the Carolingian house, Louis IV. (*d.* 954) and his son Lothaire (*d.* 986) and Louis V. (*d.* 987). On his death, Charles, a brother of Lothaire, was the only survivor, and he was imprisoned by Hugh Capet, who thus came to the throne of France. The "grey garments" seem to refer to an enforced seclusion in a cloister, but of this there is no record in history, and it is possible that Dante may have mixed up the closing years of the Merovingian dynasty with those of the Carolingian, just as he scarcely seems to have sufficiently distinguished Hugh Capet the father from his son of the same name.

⁶¹ Dante passes over the long intermediate period, with which he was, perhaps, but imperfectly acquainted, to the events of contemporary history. The dowry of Provence refers to the accessions of territory gained by France in the marriages of Louis IX. with Margaret, the eldest daughter of Raymond Berenger, Count of Provence, and of Charles of Anjou, brother of Louis,

Then they, with force and fraud, their plunder-game
 Began and later took, as 'for amends,' 65
 Ponthieu, and lands of Norman, Gascon name :
 Charles to Italia came, as 'for amends,'
 And slew Conradin, and to heavenly throne
 Sent off St. Thomas, still as 'for amends.'
 A time I see, ere many years are gone, 70
 Which yet another Charles draws out of France,
 To make himself and his both better known.

with Beatrice, a younger daughter, who was her father's heiress. The marriages are again referred to in *Par.* vi. 133-138. In the increased wealth and power which they brought to the royal house of France, Dante saw the *sons et origo* of the miseries of Italy, and of the failure of the Empire, which was, for him, the ideal polity.

⁶⁵ The force of the thrice-repeated rhyme "for amends" lies in the thought that in every case where men might have looked for some token of shame and contrition, the only "fruits of repentance" were seen in the commission of some fresh outrage.

⁶⁶ The provinces named had belonged to England. Normandy had been taken from John (1202); Gascony, Guienne, and Ponthieu had been formally ceded by Edward I. to Philip the Fair, with a secret understanding, afterwards repudiated, that it was to be formal only (1295). Guienne was recovered in 1298.

⁶⁸ We note the poet's sympathy with the fate of the boy-prince (he was but sixteen when he died), who was the last scion of the great house of Hohenstaufen. He had come from Germany to assert his claims, as heir of Conrad IV., to Naples and Sicily, was opposed by Charles of Anjou, defeated at Tagliacozzo (*H.* xxviii. 17), and put to death, as it was believed, by the counsel of Pope Clement IV. in 1268, in cold blood, with a show of judicial formality.

⁶⁹ The story, here taken for granted, that Thomas Aquinas was poisoned by Charles of Anjou (1274), has fallen into such discredit that it is not even mentioned in the current biographies of the great Dominican Doctor. In Dante's time, however, it was currently believed throughout Italy, and is mentioned in *Vill.* ix. 218, and by all the early commentators. Thomas had lived for some years at Naples, and the King had treated him with great outward honour. He was summoned by Gregory X. to a Council at Lyons, and was asked by the King on his departure what he was going to report to the Pope about him. The answer was, "I shall tell the truth." This alarmed the King, and he commissioned a physician who was sent ostensibly to watch over the Saint's health, to get him out of the way. He died on his journey at the Cistercian monastery of Fossa Nova, near Terracina, at the age of forty-seven. For further references to Aquinas, see *Par.* x. 98. It may be noted, however, that Charles of Anjou is placed, not in Hell, but in Purgatory, in the Valley of the Kings (*C.* vii. 113). Was this due to Dante's memory of his friendship with Charles Martel? (*Par.* viii. 49.) There was a record, however, of words of contrition and faith spoken on his death-bed (*Vill.* vii. 95).

⁷⁰ The "other" is Charles of Valois, whose intervention in the affairs of Florence, which Dante had opposed, led to his banishment and that of the other Bianchi. He was brother of Philip the Fair. He was invited to

He with no arms goes forth, but that same lance
 That Judas fought his joust with, and that so
 He thrusts, it smites fair Florence in her paunch. 75
 Thence he no lands, but sin and shame and woe
 Shall gain, which all the more on him shall press
 The more that loss to him as nought shall show.
 Another from his ship, in sore distress,
 Taken, I see his daughters sell, and deal 80
 As corsairs do with slaves that they possess.
 O Avarice ! what worse ill can we feel,
 Since thou my lineage to thyself draw'st so,
 That they their heart against their own flesh steel ?
 But to eclipse past ill and future woe, 85
 I in Alagna see the *fleur-de-lys*,
 Christ, in His Vicar, captive to the foe.

settle the disorders of Florence by Boniface VIII. as pacificator, was guilty there of many acts of treachery (the "spear of Judas"), and, after an unsuccessful enterprise in Sicily, returned to France in 1302. Like our own John, he was known as "Lackland," his policy bringing with it no accession of territory. His son, as Philip VI., began the succession of the house of Valois on the throne of France. Line 72 implies that he had disclosed the evil nature of his house even more than Charles of Anjou. The bold figure of l. 75 points to what one may call the "evisceration" of Florence by the expulsion of its best citizens and the spoiling of their goods.

80 The "other," in this case, is Charles II. of Naples, son of Charles of Anjou. In 1284 he was taken prisoner at sea by Ruggieri di Lauria, admiral of Peter, king of Arragon, and although his father died in 1285, was not released to take his place as king of Naples till 1288. He gave his daughter Beatrice in marriage to Azzo, Marquis of Este (Hugh Capet's words being a prophecy *ex eventu*). It was believed that he had done so for the sake of money, 30,000 or 100,000 florins, Azzo being much older than Beatrice, and of evil repute. (For further notices of Charles II. see *Par.* vi. 106, xix. 127.) To Dante this seemed as base as the slave trade in girls carried on by the Saracen corsairs who infested the Mediterranean.

86 The *fleur-de-lys* (known popularly as a lily, but in form more like an iris) first figured in the armorial bearings of the kings of France (lilies *or* on a field *azure*) under Louis VII. (1137-1180), but a legend connected it with the conversion of Clovis (Folkard, *Plant-Lore*, p. 387).

87 Dante's abhorrence of the iniquities of the French princes is stronger even than his antipathy to Boniface VIII. (comp. *H.* xix. 53; *Purg.* xxxii. 149; *Par.* ix. 132, *et al.*). To him the treatment of that Pontiff by the emissaries of Philip the Fair (see *Milm. J. C.* v. 145-154) was an outrage on one who was officially, whatever his character might be, the vicar of Christ. The mockery and scorn, the wormwood and the gall, of the crucifixion were reproduced by this new Pilate when he gave Boniface into the hands of his enemies of the house of Colonna.

Him once again as mocked and scorned I see,
 I see once more the vinegar and gall,
 And slain between new robbers hangeth He: 90
 I see the Pilate new in such rage fall,
 This sates him not, but, all law put aside,
 With pirate sails he sacks the Templars' hall.
 When, O my Lord, shall I be satisfied,
 With looking on the secret vengeance stored, 95
 Which Thou, Thy wrath assuaging, still dost hide?
 That which I said of her, the spouse adored
 Of the Eternal Spirit, and which made
 Me turn to thee for some explaining word,

⁹³ The sentence of condemnation falls on Philip the Fair for the other great crime which was written in the records of his reign, the suppression of the Order of Templars on monstrous, and often incredible, charges of heresy, idolatry, and impurity. Their estates were confiscated, their Grand Master was burnt at the stake (1314). Philip extorted from Pope Clement V., practically appointed by him, and holding his Court at Avignon, a reluctant assent; but Dante notes in the whole transaction the absence of a fair trial, and therefore of a true decree of righteous judgment, and traces it not to the righteous zeal of the French king, but to his insatiable covetousness. The earlier commentators, it may be noted, refer the lines only to Philip's attacks on Church property in general (Milm. *L. C.* vii., 181-276; Wilcke, *Tempel. Orden.*). For Dante's later action against Philip, see *Life*, c. 7.

⁹⁴ Is this also a prophecy *ex eventu*, alluding to the disgrace and disasters which, in the judgment of historians (*Vill.* viii. 92), came on Philip and his sons as a retribution for the crimes here specified? 'The longing of the souls to behold that retribution finds its justification in the words of *Ps.* lviii., and if more were wanted, in the teaching of Aquinas (*Summ.* iii. *Suppl.* 94, 3). Line 96 implies the thought that there is a calmness even in the wrath of God because He foresees the working out of His own righteous vengeance.

⁹⁷ See l. 19. The bride of the Holy Ghost is, of course, the Blessed Virgin Mother. To contemplate the pattern instances of holiness is the occupation of the days of Purgatory. Night is given to dwelling on the hatefulness of the sins which are the opposites of that holiness. So here we have (1) Pygmalion, of whom Dante read in *Æn.* i. 340-352 as having murdered Sichaëus, king of Tyre, and driven his sister Dido into exile for the sake of gold; (2) Midas, who, in his folly, wished that all that he touched might be turned to gold (*Met.* xi. 85-145); (3) Achan, who stole part of the spoil of Jericho (*Josh.* vii. 1-26); (4) Ananias and Sapphira (*Acts* v. 1-11); (5) Heliodorus, who sought to plunder the treasury of the Temple at Jerusalem, and was trampled under foot by heavenly horsemen (2 *Macc.* iii. 7-35); (6) Polymnestor, the murderer of Polydorus, son of Priam (*Æn.* iii. 19-68; *Met.* xiii. 429-438; *H.* xxx. 18); (7) Crassus, the Roman type of avarice and wealth, who was defeated by the Parthians (B.C. 59). Their king, it is said (we are reminded of the story of Cyrus in *Herod.* i. 214), cast his head into a vessel of molten gold with the words "*Aurum sitisti, aurum bibe*" (*Vell. Paterc.* ii. 82).

This hath been ordered, by us to be prayed, 100
 Long as day lasts, but when the night comes on,
 Far other sounds are from our lips conveyed.
 At that time tell we of Pygmalion,
 Whom eager will, o'er-gluttonous of gold,
 Made traitor, robber, parricide in one: 105
 And then the wretched doom of Midas old,
 Following his fond desire yet more to take,
 A laughing-stock for all men to behold;
 Of foolish Achan next we mention make,
 How he the plunder stole, and so the blame 110
 Of Joshua's wrath still seems on him to break.
 Sapphira and her husband then we name,
 We praise the hoof-beats Heliodorus bore,
 And all the mount is circled with the shame
 Of Polymnestor who slew Polydore; 115
 And last of all we cry, 'O Crassus, say,
 For now thou know'st, how tastes the molten ore.'
 Now high, now low, our mingling voices play,
 As we are spurred by impulse strong in speech,
 Now quicker pace, now tardier to display. 120
 But in the good which here by day we teach
 I was not all alone; yet no one near,
 Upraised his voice a listener's ear to reach."
 We had moved onward, and had left him there,
 And struggled with much effort to make way, 125
 As far as granted power might onward bear,
 When I perceived, like something that gives way,
 The mountain shake, and felt a chill from thence
 Such as he feels who sees death near to slay.

¹¹⁸ The words throw us back on Dante's question in ll. 35, 36. He had thought that Hugh Capet was alone in singing the praises of the Virgin and of Fabricius. He learns that others also had joined in those praises, but that his voice alone was audible. The thought implied is, that he was more ardent in proportion as he was nearer to the end.

¹²⁷ The explanation of the trembling and of the cry of l. 136 is found in C. xxi. 70. A soul had completed its work of penance and purification, and the mountain thrills with joy and the souls of all who have been sharers in the discipline burst out into a *Gloria in excelsis*. In the Roman ritual the hymn

Not Delos quivered with such violence, 130
 Ere yet Latona chose it for a nest
 To bear the twin eyes of Heaven's vault immense.
 Then voices on all sides mine ears arrest,
 Such that my Master turns himself to me,
 Saying, "While I guide thee, be not doubt-
 opprest." 135
 Then "*Gloria in Excelsis Deo*" we
 Heard them all say, gathering with mind intent
 From those most near us what the words might be;
 There we remained unmoved, on listening bent,
 As did the shepherds who first heard that song, 140
 Till it was done, and all vibrating spent.
 Then on our holy road we moved along,
 And watched the souls that on the earth thick lay,
 Already turned to wail of custom long.
 And never did my ignorance so sway, 145
 In conflict strong, my soul with thirst to know,
 If here my memory leads me not astray,
 As then it seemed, while I in thought did go;
 Nor dared I in my haste interrogate,
 Nor could I, of myself, the true cause show: 150
 So went I full of thought, disconsolate.

was used at Matins, and so we have another correspondence like those already noticed in C. viii. 13, xix. 73. It was also a morning hymn in the earlier Church (*D. C. A. s. v.*)

¹³⁰ For the earthquakes of Delos see *Herod.* vi. 98; *Thuc.* ii. 8. Dante seems to mix them up with the floating movement of the island as described in *Æn.* iii. 69; *Met.* vi. 189-191. The "eyes of heaven" is from Ovid (*Met.* iv. 228).

¹⁴⁴ For a moment the souls had interrupted their penance to join in the chorus of praise, but they had to return to their wonted lamentation. That work must not be neglected for the sake of any emotions, however joyful and angelic. As yet, as l. 145 shows, the trembling of the mountain remained a mystery to the pilgrim.

The Joy of the Tremulous Mountain—The Poet Statius

THE natural thirst which nought can satisfy
 Save the pure fount from which Samaria's child
 Of old entreated bountiful supply
 Wrought on me, urging eager steps and wild,
 In that encumbered path beside my Guide; 5
 And me to pity that just doom beguiled.
 And lo! as Luke the record hath supplied
 That Christ to two appeared in the way,
 When He had left the grave-vault yawning wide,
 So now behind a shadow seemed to stray, 10
 Down gazing on the crowd that lay below,
 Nor were we 'ware of him till he did say:
 "My brothers, God's peace guide you as ye go!"
 Then suddenly we turned, and Virgil gave
 The answering token we to such words owe; 15
 Then spake: "Amid the host whom God doth save
 May that true Judge's Court in peace thee place,
 Who me into eternal exile drave!"
 "How!" said he, while we went with quicker pace,
 "If ye are shades whom God doth not yet deign 20
 To help, who guides you on these stairs of Grace?"

¹ The words combine the dictum of Aristotle (*Met.* i. 1, quoted in *Conv.* i. 1) as to man's natural thirst for knowledge with the words which imply that that thirst is unsatisfied save by the teaching of the Son of Man (*Eccl.* i. 8; *John* iv. 13). Here again we have an echo from *Conv.* i. 1.

⁶ The "righteous vengeance" is the punishment of the souls described in the preceding Canto.

⁷ Comp. *Luke* xxiv. 13-16.

¹³ The speaker is the poet Statius, whom Dante held next to Virgil (comp. note on l. 81).

¹⁶ Statius takes both the pilgrims for souls on their way to Paradise, and salutes them with the scriptural greeting of *Matt.* x. 12; *John* xx. 19, 21. We note, not without wonder, that Dante could bear the thought of the "eternal exile" for his guide; the calm, I had almost said the heavenly, resignation of Virgil's answer.

¹⁹ A new wonder rises. If both the visitants are, as Statius supposes, not on their way to Paradise, how have they come so far? A *v. l.* gives "*perché andate forte*," but it reads like a conjectural emendation.

And then my Teacher: "If the marks full plain
 Thou note the Angel did on this man lay,
 Thou'lt see he needs must with the righteous reign.
 But since that she who spinneth night and day ²⁵
 Hath not as yet drawn all the distaff's thread,
 Which Clotho gives to each, and winds away,
 His soul, to thine and mine as sister bred,
 Mounting thus upward, could not come alone,
 Because it sees not, as we see, to tread. ³⁰
 Hence I from out hell's wide-oped jaws have flown
 To guide him on, and I his feet will guide,
 As far as lore of mine the power may own.
 But tell me, if thou know'st, why all the side
 O' the mountain shook, and why the spirits here, ³⁵
 All, to its sea-washed feet, with one voice cried?"
 Thus asking, he so hit the centre clear
 Of my desire, that, with the hope alone,
 My thirst was felt at once as less severe.
 Then he began: "No creature here hath known, ⁴⁰
 Without occasion fit, the holy awe
 Of this our mount, or has its use outgrown.
 Free are we here from chance and change's law;
 When one received by Heaven to Heaven doth go,
 This, and nought else, as cause, effect may draw: ⁴⁵

²² The marks are the remaining P's which the angel (C. ix. 112) had traced on Dante's brow.

²⁵ Lachesis was the one of the three Fates who drew the thread of life which was spun by Clotho, and cut at the hour of death by Atropos (*H.* xxxiii. 126).

²⁸ Is the sisterhood that of a common humanity, or of the special gift which was the common inheritance of the three poets? The latter view seems the more probable (comp. *H.* iv. 102).

³⁰ The words embody Dante's favourite thought (*Mon.* iii. 16; *Conv.* iv. 4), that no man can attain to true blessedness without the guidance, first of earthly, and then of heavenly wisdom. The form which the thought takes here is probably an echo of 1 *Cor.* xiii. 12. Virgil, as in l. 33, is conscious of the limitations of his own guidance.

³⁴ Virgil, it will be remembered, had been through Hell before (*H.* ix. 25), but Purgatory and its laws were for him an untravelled region.

⁴¹ The phrase "religion of the mountain" is an echo of the "*religio . . . dira loci*" of *Æn.* viii. 349, and this has guided me in my rendering of it. The order, which was so sacred, was liable to no changes from physical

Since neither showers of rain, not hail nor snow,
 Nor dew nor hoar-frost falleth here, above
 That first short staircase of three steps below.
 Nor see we clouds, or dense or rarer, move,
 Nor flashing light, nor child of Thaumas fair, 50
 Who oft on earth with changing home doth rove ;
 Nor vapour arid mounts above the stair,
 The topmost of the three of which I spake ;
 The Vicar of St. Peter standeth there.
 Below us more or less the earth may quake ; 55
 But, from the wind within the earth concealed,
 I know not how, it never here did shake.
 It trembles here, when guilty soul is healed,
 So that it soars aloft, or up doth rise
 Higher to climb, and that cry help doth yield. 60
 Of purity the will full proof supplies,
 Which, wholly free to change its wonted spot,
 Seizes the soul, and so helps that it flies.
 First it wills good ; but impulse suffers not,
 Which with like will God's justice setteth fast, 65
 As once to sin, so now to torment's lot.
 And I o'er whom five hundred years have passed,
 Placed in this torment, felt but now within
 Free will to seek a better seat at last.

causes. When once the threshold of the three steps had been passed, the laws that governed it were altogether spiritual.

⁵⁰ The daughter of Thaumas is Iris, the rainbow (Hesiod. *Theog.* 265 ; *Æn.* iv. 694 ; *Met.* i. 270, xi. 585). Line 51 points to the changing aspect of every rainbow according to the position of the sun and the spectator.

⁵⁴ The "vicar of St. Peter" is the angel gate-keeper of C. ix. 127. For this, as the boundary of vapours from the sea, comp. C. xxviii. 97-102.

⁶⁰ The "cry" is the *Gloria in excelsis* of C. xx. 136. It is raised when the will of the soul to rise upward is free from all impediments arising out of its own past impurities or the laws of retribution. Till then the will, which had been turned to sin, is turned to the working out of its appointed sentence, which becomes the object of a new desire. Dante, in this subtle distinction between the will that seeks freedom and that which accepts punishment as the condition of freedom, does but paraphrase the teaching of Aquinas (*Summ. P.* iii., *Supp. App.* 2, 3).

⁶⁸ Statius died *circa* A.D. 96. Of the other 704 years, 400 must, in Dante's thoughts, have been spent in the circle of the sluggish souls (C. xxii. 92) ;

Therefore thou heard'st just now the earthquake's
 din, 70
 And the blest spirits through the Mount give praise
 To their high Lord, that soon their way they win."
 So spake he, and as that which thirst allays
 Gives pleasure to the thirst proportionate,
 I fail to tell what joy his words did raise. 75
 And my wise Leader : "Now I see the net
 That holds you here, and how ye thence depart,
 Why the earth quakes and ye conjubilate.
 Now let me know, I pray thee, who thou art,
 And why thus stretched so many centuries 80
 Thou did'st lie here, to me, I pray, impart."
 "When Titus good and wise, in days of old,
 With help of Heaven's high king avenged the wounds
 Whence flowed the blood by guilty Judas sold,
 With name whence praise lasts longest, most redounds, 85
 I lived in yonder world," the soul replied.
 "Fame had I much, but knew not true faith's grounds.
 My soul of song flowed on in such sweet tide
 That, though Tolosa-born, me great Rome claimed,
 Where I my wreaths of myrtle wore with pride. 90
 As Statius yet in yonder world I'm famed ;
 I sang of Thebes and of Achilles great ;
 But fell with that my burden second-named.

the others in the *Ante-Purgatorium* or the circles in which other sins were expiated.

⁸¹ Statius enters on the narrative of his life. Dates of birth and death are fixed conjecturally at *circ.* A.D. 50, and, as above, A.D. 96. His two great works, the *Thebaid* and *Achilleid*, placed him in high repute as a poet (*Juv.* vii. 82). In Dante's thoughts, scarcely in harmony with those of later critics, he stood next to Virgil.

⁸⁵ The "enduring name" is that of "poet."

⁸⁹ There is no historical ground for the statement that Statius was born at Toulouse. His own words, indeed, point to Naples as his birthplace. Possibly Dante confused him with the rhetorician Lucius Statius, who was of the former city. Ozan. (*Purg.* p. 351), however, reports that the University of Toulouse, founded in 1215, looked to him as its great master, as Virgil was of the University of Naples. The *Sylva*, it may be noted, were not known in Dante's time.

⁹³ The *Achilleid* was left unfinished when Statius died.

Seeds for my glowing fire did scintillate,
 Kindling my soul, from that divinest light, 95
 Which many thousand doth illuminate.
 Of the *Æneid* speak I, which was quite
 My foster nurse, my mother-poesy ;
 Without it, not a dram had I of might.
 And to have lived in yonder world, when I 100
 With Virgil might have lived, I would have borne
 A year yet more ere I from exile fly."
 These words made Virgil then towards me turn
 With looks which in their stillness said " Be still ;"
 Yet sometimes even will must failure learn, 105
 For tears and laughter so their course fulfil,
 Following the passions whence each takes its rise,
 That least in truest souls they follow will.
 I did but smile, as one who winks his eyes ;
 Then silent was the shade, and gazed on me 110
 Full in those orbs where most fixed image lies,
 And said, " As thou dost hope the end to see
 Of thy great task, why saw I in thy face
 But now the lightning of a smile of glee ? "
 Thus am I on each side in evil case ; 115
 One bids me hold my peace, the other speak ;
 Therefore I sigh, and both my meaning trace.
 " Speak," said my Master, " fear thou not to break
 Thy silence, but speak out, and to him tell
 What he with such anxiety doth seek." 120
 Then I : " Perchance some wonder on thee fell,
 O ancient spirit, from that smile of mine :
 But I would have thee feel more wondrous spell.

97 The *Thebaid* does not supply any direct evidence of the ardent admiration here expressed, but the form and structure of the poem, and its division into the same number of books as the *Æneid*, is perhaps sufficient evidence that Statius took Virgil as his model. The feeling expressed, the readiness to bear one year more of purgatorial pain, if only he might have seen and known Virgil after the flesh, may well be taken by us as Dante's own.

103-120 The byplay that follows is sketched with an exquisite subtlety. Virgil by his looks enjoins silence. Dante smiles at the thought that Statius is on the point of gaining his wish without the price which he was ready to

Lo, he who guides mine eyes to height divine,
 He is that Virgil from whom thou didst gain 125
 The strength to sing of Gods and heroes' line :
 By other cause that smile would'st thou explain,
 Count it not true ; in this the true cause greet,
 E'en in the words thou spok'st of him so plain." 130
 Already was he bowed to clasp the feet
 Of my wise Guide, but he, " O Brother," spake,
 " Not so ; for thou, a shade, a shade dost meet."
 And he uprising, said, " Now thou canst take
 The measure of the love which burns in me,
 When shadowy forms for solid I mistake, 135
 And quite forget that vanity are we."

CANTO XXII

*The Angel of the Sixth Circle—Statius and the Story of his
 Conversion—Sins of Appetite*

BEHIND us was the Angel staying now,
 The Angel who to that sixth round had led,
 And blotted out one mark from off my brow ;
 And " Those who thirst for righteousness " had said,
 " *Beati* are they," and to this his song 5
 Joined *sitiunt*, and nought else was uttered.

pay for it. Statius, seeing the lighting of that smile, presses for an explanation. Dante stands as in a strait between the two poets.

¹³⁰ Statius, as in C. xxii. 66, had another ground of reverence besides his admiration of him as a poet.

¹³² Had Dante forgotten that he had made Sordello and Virgil embrace each other (C. vii. 15), or was the soul of Statius, now that he was moving upward, clothed with a more subtle corporeity than that of the Lombard poet?

¹ The Angel of Justice stands at the passage between the fifth circle and the sixth, and, as elsewhere, cancels another of the P's on the poet's brow.

⁴ The thirst for righteousness stands in contrast with the thirst for gold, and the promise attached to it is proclaimed, as before in one of the Beatitudes.

⁶ A v. l. "*sitio*" for "*sitiunt*" has led to the conjecture that there may

And I with lighter footstep sped along
 Than through the other passes, so that I
 Those swift souls followed, without toil, and strong.
 When Virgil thus began, "Love kindled by 10
 True virtue asketh other love to burn,
 Provided that its flame shines outwardly.
 So from the hour when down to us did turn,
 In *limbus* dark of Hades, Juvenal,
 And I from him of thy esteem did learn, 15
 My hearty good-will did upon thee fall
 As fully as on any yet unknown,
 So that these stairs I now full short may call.
 But tell,—and as to friend be pardon shown,
 If too much freedom loose perchance the rein, 20
 And, as a friend, hold thought's communion,—
 How could it be that eager greed of gain
 Should find a place within thy breast so wise,
 With wisdom thou with much care didst attain ? "
 At first those words in Statius bade arise 25
 Somewhat of laughter, and then answered he :
 "Each word of thine dear proof of love supplies.
 Truly full often many things thou'lt see
 Which unto doubt false matter minister,
 Because of causes true that from us flee ! 30

be an allusion to the "I thirst" of *John* xix. 28. *Sitiunt* is, however, probably the true reading.

7 The greater ease of movement was (as in *C.* xii. 116) from the victory over another sin.

10 Another presentation of the thought of *H.* v. 103, transferred from human love to the love of righteousness.

14 Juvenal was contemporary with Statius, and, as has been seen (note on *C.* xxi. 81), had spoken of him in terms of warm praise.

19 One notes the lowliness with which the master speaks to the scholar, because the scholar is on a higher spiritual level than his own. Virgil had heard from Hadrian (*C.* ix. 115) that the avaricious were undergoing the discipline of the fifth circle. He cannot understand how one so wise as Statius could have yielded to so base a vice. He hears as an explanation the ethical view already presented in *H.* vii., that prodigality and avarice are but opposite forms of the same root-evil, the preference of the good things of earth to those of heaven, and that Statius took his place among those who had yielded to the former.

Thy question doth thy full belief aver
 That I in yonder life loved gain too well,
 Perchance from that round where thou found'st me here.
 Now know that I from avarice did dwell
 Much too remote, and 'twas for this excess 35
 Thousands of months of suffering on me fell.
 And but that I that evil did redress,
 And hearkened to thee where thou didst exclaim,
 As if man's nature wrought thee sore distress,
 'O cursed thirst of gold, to what foul shame 40
 Dost thou not lead man's wandering appetite?'
 I should play now the jousts' dismal game.
 Then I perceived our hands too widely might
 Open in spending, learning how to mourn
 For this as well as other deeds not right. 45
 How many shall rise up with locks all shorn,
 Through ignorance, which of this very sin
 Repentance bars in life or death-hour's bourn!
 Know that the guilt which farthest place would win
 From any given sin, that it may dry 50
 Its verdure rank, must with it here begin.

40 The problem here is to explain how Dante could have seen in the famous words of *Æn.* iii. 56—

*"Quid non mortalia pectora cogis
 Auri sacra fames,"*

a remedy for the sin of prodigality. It is complicated by the fact of a *v. l.* *perchè* and a *chè* in l. 40. Two explanations have been given: (1) That Dante, deliberately or in ignorance, took *sacra* in the sense of "holy." "Why did not a righteous, duly-measured love of gold control the desires of men?" or, as Butl., the "*sacra fames*" = holy hunger of gold = holy poverty. (2) Keeping the true sense of *sacra*, "Why does not the accursed thirst for gold (seen in prodigality as well as in avarice) control the appetites of men in due measure, instead of out of measure?" (3) With the *v. l.*, "To what evil, in contrasted forms, does not that accursed thirst lead the desires of men!" I incline to (3).

42 Comp. the punishment of the avaricious and the prodigal in *H.* vii. 25-30.

46 The words point to the facts (1) that the prodigal is often ignorant that his life, as such, is sinful; (2) that that ignorance is not of the "invincible" kind that can be pleaded as an excuse for sin. The prodigal might know, ought to know, that his life is at variance with the Divine law (*Aquin. Summ.* i. 2, 76. 2).

51 The image is that of rank-growing plants, rich with excess of moisture,

Therefore though I am found in misery,
 Purging my guilt, with those o'er fond of gold,
 It comes upon me through the contrary."
 "Now when thou didst the fierce arms sing of old, 55
 Of those who wrought Jocasta's double woe,"
 Said he who sang the songs of shepherds' fold,
 "By that which Clio there to thee doth show,
 'Twould seem thou wert not with the true faith
 crowned,
 In lack of which good deeds no help bestow. 60
 If this be so, what sun or torch shed round
 Its rays upon thy dark, that thou couldst steer
 Thy bark upon the track the Fisher found?"
 And he to him: "Thou first my steps didst bear
 Towards Parnassus, in its grots to drink, 65
 And then the way to God for me mad'st clear.
 Thou didst as one who walks by night with link
 Behind him, and no help therefrom doth gain,
 But those who follow maketh wise to think,

which need to be dried up. An echo of *Ezek.* xx. 47 may have been floating in the poet's ears, suggesting the thought that the "green tree" was a fit parable of the prodigal. There is absolutely no authority for ascribing this character to Statius, and, so far as we know, Dante must have framed for him what has been called an "ideal biography."

56 The twofold sorrow of Jocasta is found in the contentions of her sons Eteocles and Polynices, as set forth in the *Thebaid*.

57 The description of Virgil indicates that it was not the *Æneid* only that Dante loved. The Eclogues and Bucolics were also the objects of his admiration, and, as in his poetical correspondence with Joannes de Virgilio, their form was reproduced by him.

58 Clio, as the Muse of History, is recognised as having inspired Statius (*Theb.* i. 41). The poem, Virgil implies, shows no trace of Christian faith. How was it, by what natural or supernatural light, that the truth had been revealed to Statius?

63 The fisherman is, of course, St. Peter. The image had become familiar through the *Sigillum Piscatoris* used by the Roman Pontiffs, on which Christ was represented as fishing with a line, St. Peter with a net (*Mart.* s. v. *Pêcheur*). The first mention of the seal occurs in a letter of Clement IV. in 1265, which he describes as being used by the Popes "*in secretis*" (Waterton, *Archæol.* xi. 13).

67 The simile comes from the common practice of a master walking in the streets at night, his servant going before him and holding a torch or lantern behind his back.

When thou didst say, 'The age begins again ; 70
 Justice returns and primal state of man,
 And a new heaven-born offspring comes to reign.'
 Bard was I through thee, through thee Christian ;
 But that thou better see what I design,
 I'll stretch my hand with tints to fill my plan. 75
 Already teemed the world with Creed divine,
 Through all its wide extent as broadcast sown,
 By those who bore the eternal Kingdom's sign.
 And those thy words that now I touched upon
 Did with those preachers new so well agree, 80
 That with them oft I held communion.
 So holy then they came to seem to me,
 That, when Domitian's persecution fell,
 Not without tears of mine their grief flowed free.
 And when on earth I lived out life's brief spell, 85
 I helped them, and their righteous customs made
 All other sects to me contemptible.
 And ere in song I bade the Greeks invade
 The streams of Thebes, I also was baptized,
 But lived a secret Christian, being afraid, 90
 And long with pagan worship compromised ;
 And this lukewarmness full four hundred year
 Kept me in path in that fourth round comprised.
 Of thee, who mad'st the veil to disappear
 Which hid from me that good of which I speak, 95
 While a long climb remains before us here,

70 The words are a literal translation of Virg. *Ecl.* iv. 5-7. Dante follows the patristic interpretation, which, beginning with Euseb. (*Vit. Const.* i. 32), Lactantius (*Div. Inst.* vii. 24), and Augustine (*Civ. Dei*, x. 27), who saw in Virgil a conscious prophet of the Christ, was reproduced, in spite of S. Jerome's protest (*Epist.* 53 *ad Paul.* c. 7), by most mediæval interpreters, and represented as having converted persecutors into martyrs (*Act. Sanct. Aug.* ii. 407). Instances which may have had a special influence on Dante's mind are found in its citation by Donatus, Bishop of Fiesole (Ozan. *Docum. Ined.* p. 55), and by Innocent III. (*Serm.* ii. *in fest. Nat. Opp.* p. 80). On the assumption that Statius was thus converted, Dante is again playing the part of the writer of an "ideal biography." He pictures what ought to have been the effect on the poet's mind of the Virgilian prophecy, and of its fulfilment in the lives of the preachers of the new faith. Such a man *must* have

Where dear old Terence is I fain would seek,
 Cæcilius, Plautus, Varro, if thou know ;
 Say, are all damned, and in what region bleak ? ”
 “ They, Persius, I, and many more enow,” 100
 Answered my Guide, “ are with that Greek bard
 thrown
 Who as the Muses’ best loved child did grow,
 In the dark starless prison’s outmost zone.
 Full often talk we of that Mountain high
 Which claims our nursing-mothers as its own. 105
 Euripides and Antiphon are nigh
 To us, with Agatho, Simonides,
 And other Greeks, brow-wreathed for poesy.
 There of thy race, in company with these,
 Antigone, Deiphile, are met ; 110
 Ismene, sad as ever, Argia sees.

wept over the sufferers of Domitian’s persecution. Dante assumes that he was baptized before he wrote the *Thebaid*, but remained a crypto-Christian, and had to expiate his cowardice by four hundred years in the circle of the *accidiosi* (C. xvii. and xviii.).

97 With a feeling which we may assume was Dante’s own, Statius inquires after the fate of the writers he had most honoured—Terence, the writer of comedies (the readings vary, *antico* and *amico*; d. B.C. 159), Cæcilius, also a dramatic poet (d. B.C. 168), Plautus (d. B.C. 184). There were two Varros, more or less famous as poets, one of Reate (d. B.C. 27), of whom Cicero (*Brut.* xv. 60) and Augustine (*Civ. Dei*, vi. 2) speak in terms of high praise, and the other of Narbonne, who wrote an epic on the Argonautic expedition. Dante probably refers to the former.

100 The wider hope, as far as Dante dared to hold it (*H.* iv. 40-42; *Par.* xix. 70-77, xx. 94-132), finds utterance in the words that follow. The writers named—and Persius also, the young Stoic poet who died at the age of twenty-eight in the purity of a white-souled manhood—and others more than could be named, were not damned as men commonly counted damnation, but were in the calm fields and by fair waters, and holding high converse with each other, excluded only from the hope of fuller knowledge and of a clearer vision. The “Greek” of l. 101 is, of course, Homer.

106 The list expands. We miss the names of Æschylus and Sophocles, but it includes Euripides, Antiphon, also a writer of tragedies (A. v. l. “Anacreonte” has little to commend it), Simonides (d. B.C. 559), as representing lyric poetry, Agathon, tragedian (d. B.C. 401).

109 It is, perhaps, in some measure a self-revelation that Dante represents Virgil as thinking Statius likely to be interested in the fate of the men and women of whom he had written in his poem. He knew, by his own experience, how the creations of the poet’s mind became living persons to him. In Antigone we have the daughter of Œdipus, of whose devotion to father and brother Sophocles wrote: Deiphile, wife of Tydeus, one of the “Seven against Thebes;” Argia, her sister, and wife of Polynices; Ismene,

There she who showed Langía's rivulet,
There Thetis and Tiresias' daughter ; there
Deidamía with her sisters set."

The poets both already silent were, 115
Eager once more to cast their glance each way,
Freed from their climbing up that close-walled stair.
Already now four handmaids of the day
Were left behind, the fifth one at the yoke
Was pointing upward still the fiery ray. 120

"I deem we now should turn," my Guide then spoke,
"Our right arm's shoulder to the outer side,
Circling, as we are wont, around the rock."

Thus there our former custom was our guide ; 125
And we with less misgiving took our way,
Because that true soul us accompanied.

They went before, and I behind did stay
Alone, and listened to their converse high,
Which gave me skill the poet's lyre to play.
But soon their sweet discourse was broken by 130
A tree which midway in the path we found,
With fruits that sweetly smelt and pleasantly.

with all the sorrow but not the courage of her sister Antigone ; Hypsipyle (see C. xxvi. 94, *H.* xviii. 93, for other facts in her history), who led the Seven, when they were athirst, to the fountain of Langia in Bœotia. Manto the daughter of Tiresias, appears in *H.* xx. 52 as in the fourth Bolgia. Had Dante forgotten this, or does he assume that Tiresias had more than one daughter, or does the "there" of l. 109 take a wider range than that of the first circle of Hell?

¹¹² Thetis, the wife of Peleus and mother of Achilles, named probably as one of the persons in Statius's other poem, the *Achilleid*. Deidamia, daughter of Lycomedes, and beloved by Achilles, named for the same reason. Comp. C. ix. 34-39 ; *H.* v. 65, xxvi. 62.

¹¹⁸ The "handmaids of the day" are the hours (C. xii. 81), and the fact implied, starting from 6 A.M., is that it was between 10 and 11.

¹²¹ The pilgrims, no longer asking their way, follow the rule of C. xix. 81, and turn over more to the right. Statius goes with them, holding sweet converse with Virgil on the secrets of their art.

¹³¹ Two trees meet us in this circle ; the other, appearing in C. xxiv. 103-117, is defined as a scion from the tree of knowledge. Is this also of the same nature, or is it an offshoot from the tree of life, or does it represent the intermediate element of joys that are pure and innocent in themselves, but call for temperance and even abstinence in their use? The last seems the most probable hypothesis.

And as a fir-tree tapers from the ground,
 From bough to bough, so that did upward spread ;
 I trow, that none might scale its topmost round. ¹³⁵
 And on the side which barred a closer tread,
 Fell headlong from the rock a streamlet clear,
 And over all the foliage green was shed.
 And the two poets to the tree drew near,
 And then a voice from out the leaves did cry : ¹⁴⁰
 "Great dearth for you of fruit that groweth here."
 And then, "Much more cared Mary for supply
 That so the marriage might have honour due,
 Than for that mouth which pleads for you on high.
 And ancient Roman dames contentment knew, ¹⁴⁵
 Drinking of water clear ; and Daniel
 Held meats in scorn, and gathered wisdom true.
 That primal age, which did as gold excel,
 Seasoned its acorns with keen appetite,
 And thirst to nectar turned each springing well. ¹⁵⁰
 Locusts and honey were the viands light
 That fed the Baptist in the desert waste ;
 Whence stands he clothed in majesty and might,
 As in the Gospel ye may find him traced.

¹³³ The picture presented is that of a fir-tree, tapering from branch to branch as the tree rises, till men cannot climb. Beneath the symbol we learn the truth that men, in the discipline of penitence, must abstain even from blameless joys. They may see and smell the fruit ; they may hear the trickling of the water on the leaves ; but they may not taste of either.

¹⁴¹ The voice coming from the tree, like an oracle from Dodona's oak, is probably to be thought of as uttered by its angel guardian.

¹⁴² Examples of abstinence come after the manner of other circles. When Mary pointed out the want of wine at Cana, it was not for herself, but for the honour of those who gave the wedding-feast (C. xiii. 29). The use of wine, according to old tradition, was unknown to the matrons of ancient Rome (*Val. Max.* ii. 1). Daniel (*Dan.* i. 1-20) was an example of rigorous abstinence in the midst of luxuries.

¹⁴³ The description of the golden age is taken from Dante's favourite authors, *Æn.* viii. 324 ; Ovid, *Met.* i. 89-112 ; *Boeth.* ii. 5. Comp. *Purg.* xxviii. 139.

¹⁵⁰ Comp. *Matt.* iii. 4 ; *Mark* i. 6. Dante accepts the "locusts" of the Gospel narrative in the natural meaning of the word. The fact that the Baptist was the patron saint of Florence gives a special force to his example.

The Discipline of Appetite—The Story of Forese Donati

WHILE I mine eyes upon the leafage green
 Fixed, with such eager gaze as giveth one,
 Whose life in catching birds hath wasted been ;
 My more than Father said to me : " My son,
 Come now, I pray ; what time to us is lent, 5
 We so should spend that better gain be won."
 I turned my face, and instantly I went
 Close to those Sages, who discoursed so well,
 That little effort seemed in walking spent.
 And lo ! a wailing song upon us fell, 10
 E'en "*Labia mea, Domine,*" in strain
 That made our breasts with joy and sorrow swell.
 " O my sweet Father, what hear I again ?"
 So I began, and he : " Those shades that go
 Now loose, perchance, the knot of their debt's
 chain." 15
 And e'en as eager pilgrims often do,
 Who when they light midway on folk unknown,
 Turn round to them, yet do not linger so,
 Thus, behind us, a crowd came running on,
 More swift than we, and on us fixed their gaze, 20
 A crowd of souls, in silent prayer each one.

³ The poet seems to look back upon the sports of his youth, *e.g.*, falconry, of his delight in which we find so many traces in *H.* xvii. 127, xxii. 130, *et al.*, as so much wasted time.

⁸ Possibly a reminiscence of the saying of Publius Syrus, "*Comes facundus in viâ pro vehiculo est.*"

¹¹ The words are from *Ps.* li. 17. The great penitential psalm was a fit utterance for the repentant souls. Here, as elsewhere, the quotation implies the whole context. *Ps.* li. comes into the Roman service for Lauds on Tuesday, another instance of the correspondence already noticed. See note on *C.* xx. 127.

¹⁶ The pilgrims—I take the word in its narrower sense—are so absorbed in thinking of the goal of their journey, that they take little heed of the passers-by whom they chance to meet. Possibly the words contain a reminiscence of the *V. N.* c. 41. So it was with the souls that now meet the poet's eyes who had yielded to the sin of gluttony.

Each with dark dim cavernous eyes did gaze,
 Pallid in face, and so exceeding thin,
 Their body's surface every bone displays.
 I do not think that, when all worn to skin, 25
 E'en Erisichthon showed as half so tanned
 By his long fast, when fear was worst within.
 I said, as I in thought their features scanned,
 "These are the race that lost Jerusalem
 When Mary took her son's flesh in her hand." 30
 Seemed their eye-sockets like rings void of gem :
 He who in human face doth omo read,
 Would here have recognised full clear the M.
 Who would have thought an apple's scent could breed—
 Not knowing how—such keen and sharp desire, 35
 Or that which from pure water doth proceed.
 Still did I what had made them gaunt admire,
 Seeking the cause, not yet made manifest,
 That with such skin and scales did them attire.
 And lo ! from out his head's cavernous nest 40
 A spirit turned his eyes and gazed on me,
 And then cried out, "With what grace am I blest !"
 Ne'er by his face should I have known 'twas he,
 But in his voice was that to me revealed
 Which in his face outworn I could not see. 45
 That spark in me as with a flash unsealed
 My knowledge of the features sorely marred:
 Forese's face I knew, no more concealed.

22-27 Possibly a reproduction of the description of hunger in *Met.* viii. 103-110.

²⁶ Erisichthon, who had profaned the sacred grove of Ceres, was punished with an insatiable hunger, leading him at last to devour his own flesh (*Met.* viii 740-880).

³⁰ The story is told by Josephus (*Wars*, vi. 3).

³² The eyebrows formed the M, each eye an O. The full thought is worked out in a sermon by Berthold of Regensburg (*d.* 1270), whose writings Dante may have known, and who finds, bringing in ears and nose, nostrils and mouth, the complete formula of HOMO DEI. Here, we are told, the M was plain enough.

⁴⁸ The emaciated spectre turns out to be one whom Dante had known, Forese Donati, brother of his great foe, Corso (C. xxiv. 82), and of the

"Ah, look not thou at this dry scab and hard,"
 So prayed he, "which my countenance doth stain," 50
 Nor to this flesh so meagre and so scarred ;
 But tell me true who thou art, who these twain,
 Yonder, who here have thee accompanied ;
 Delay not this in clear speech to explain."
 "That face of thine, I wept for when it died, 55
 Gives me no less cause now for sore despair,
 Beholding it so altered," I replied.
 "But say in God's name, what leaves thee so bare ?
 Nor bid me speak while wonder holds me still ;
 Ill can he speak who's filled with other care." 60
 And he to me said, "From the Eternal Will
 Falls virtue on the water and the tree
 Behind us ; hence for me this leanness ill.
 This people all, that wail their misery 65
 Through yielding to ungoverned appetite,
 By thirst and hunger holier come to be.
 To eat and drink the fragrance doth invite
 Which issues from the fruit, and from the spray
 That far and wide bedews the verdure bright.
 And not once only winding on our way 70
 In this our round, our pain renewed we see.
 'Pain' said I: 'consolation' I should say ;

Piccarda of *Par.* iii. 47, and therefore connected with the poet by his marriage with Gemma Donati. Line 78 shows that he died in A.D. 1295 or 1296. No contemporary writers name him, and when commentators describe him as addicted to gluttony, they are simply giving their inferences from what they find. The name Forese occurs in two sonnets ascribed to Dante as that of a prodigal, but they are rightly rejected by Witte and other critics (*Frat. O. M.* i. 286). Dante seems to have loved him while he lived (l. 115), and to have lamented his death (l. 55).

63 The water and the tree of C. xxii. 131-137 bring with them a power that wears away the fulness of flesh of the self-indulgent, and that by the law of abstinence which now compels them to deny themselves even the simplest and purest joys. They endure a pain like that of Tantalus.

72 The thought is eminently characteristic of mediæval faith. The pains of Purgatory, however keen, are accepted as means to the desired end, and are therefore the soul's greatest solace. "Next to Paradise," said St. Catherine of Genoa, "there is more content in Purgatory than anywhere in the world" (*Tr. del. Purg.* c. ii.).

For that same will that leads us to the tree
 Made Christ to utter *Eli* joyously,
 When with His blood He made our spirits free." 75
 "Forese, from the day," to him said I,
 "Thou left'st the world a better life to win,
 Up to this time five years have not rolled by :
 If thou had'st lost the power for further sin,
 Ere on thee came the hour of that blest woe 80
 Through which we wedlock new with God begin,
 How hast thou mounted hither? Surely so
 I should have thought to find thee where delay
 By equal time repairs itself below."
 And he to me : "So quickly here to stay, 85
 To drink the wormwood sweet of this my pain,
 My Nella's hot tears sped me on my way.
 With her deep sighs and prayer's devoutest strain
 She drew me from the region where men wait,
 And set me free from circles that detain. 90
 So much more dear to God, more loved the state
 Of that my widowed one I loved of yore,
 As she in her good deeds is isolate ;
 For yon Barbagia on Sardinia's shore
 Can in her women boast more modesty 95
 Than that Barbagia where my loss she bore.

74 The will of the suffering souls is so far one with that of Christ in the darkest hour of His Passion, that He too of His own free will endured the cross that He might be "made perfect through suffering" (*Heb.* ii. 10).

79 Dante, it would seem, knew, perhaps from personal companionship, that Forese had delayed his repentance till disease had deprived him of the power of sinning after the old fashion, and had therefore expected to find him in the circle of the *Ante-Purgatorium* with Belacqua and his fellows.

87 Nothing is known of Nella (short for Giovannela) beyond what is implied here, that she was pious and good, prayed often for her husband's soul, and presumably was still a widow when Dante wrote his *Purgatory*, probably *circ.* A.D. 1314.

94 Sardinia, it will be remembered, was subject to Pisa (*H.* xxii. 89, xxix. 48). Evil tales were told of the mountain district of Barbagia. There women went about half-naked, and were shamelessly licentious. Such a Barbagia, Dante says, speaking through Forese, had Florence become. The whole passage reminds one of *Isai.* iii. 16-24.

O brother sweet, what more can I reply ?
 A time to come already looms in sight
 To which this hour shall not seem old, but nigh,
 When preachers from the pulpit shall indict 100
 The bold unblushing ladies Florentine,
 Who walk with breasts and bosoms bared to light.
 What Saracens, or those of barbarous line
 E'er stood in need, to make them covered go,
 Of spiritual or other discipline ? 105
 But if those shameless women could but know
 What doom for them the heavens bring by-and-
 bye,
 They with wide mouths e'en now would wail
 their woe.
 For if my foresight looketh not awry,
 They will wax sad ere yet the boy has beard 110
 Who now is hushed to sleep with lullaby.
 No longer, Brother, be thy name unheard,
 See thou that not I only, but we all,
 Gaze where through thee the sun hath veiled
 appeared."
 Then I to him: "If thou wilt best recall 115
 What thou to me wast, and what I to thee,
 Still will that memory on thee grievous fall.

⁹⁹ This also may have been a prophecy; but, though sumptuary laws were passed in Florence to regulate women's dress in 1323 (*Vill.* ix. 245, x. 11), the earliest notice of preaching of this kind brings us to the episcopate of Agnolo Acciaiuoli in 1351. One wonders whether it was quoted in the days of Savonarola. On the dress of the men and women of Florence, comp. *Par.* xv. 112-120.

¹⁰⁵ The "other discipline" implies fines or imprisonment, such as were actually imposed in 1323.

¹⁰⁶ The words include all the disasters that happened at Florence, say between 1300 and 1316, the oppression of Charles of Valois, the faction-fights and banishments, the great fire of 1300, and the catastrophe of the Ponte alla Carraja in 1304, perhaps also the defeat of the Florentines at Monte Catini in 1315.

¹¹⁶ The words speak of hours of close intercourse, perhaps of companionship in self-indulgence, perhaps of imperfect repentance and perplexed doubts like those implied in *H.* i. 1-9.

He from that former life of ours turned me,
 Who goes before me; but few days ago,
 When full-orbed showed his sister whom we see " 120
 (I pointed to the sun), "he led me on,
 Through the deep night of those who die indeed,
 With this true flesh which follows him alone.
 My path from thence his health and comfort speed,
 Climbing and winding round the mountain's side, 125
 Which makes you straight whom the world bent
 with greed.
 So far he saith that he will be my guide
 Till I shall be where Beatrice dwells;
 There I must stay, by him unaccompanied.
 Virgil this is, who thus his message tells," 130
 Pointing to him, "the other is that shade,
 For whom but now your realm through all its dells
 Shook, when for him its full release it made."

CANTO XXIV

*The Sins of Appetite—Buonagiunta of Lucca—The Secret of
 true Poetry—The fiery Furnace*

NOR motion made our speech, nor speech our tread
 One whit more slow, but talking, on went we,
 Like ships whose sails before fair winds are spread;
 And spirits, who as twice dead were to see,
 From hollow pits of eyes showed wonder great, 5
 When they perceived a living form in me.

118 The journey of the travellers had begun, *i.e.*, on the full moon before Easter.

128 It is a fair inference from the natural way in which Beatrice is named that Forese had known before his death of Dante's devotion to her. It is difficult to see what meaning could be attached to them if she was simply a symbol of the Empire or of a pantheistic heresy.

² The speed was quick enough for Dante, but, as l. 91 shows, not so for the impatient zeal of Forese to complete his appointed task, and of this Dante is conscious.

And I, continuing speech I held of late,
 Said: "He, perchance, more slowly mounts on
 high
 Than else he would, for others' sake to wait;
 But tell me, if thou knowest, where doth lie 10
 Piccarda, and if any of renown
 Among this gazing crowd I may descry."
 "My sister, good as she was fair—I own
 Which she was most I know not—now hath won 15
 On high Olympus her triumphal crown."
 So said he first, and then: "Reason is none
 To hinder naming each, so worn and marred
 By our hard fare is each complexion.
 This Buonagiunta is," then looking hard,
 And pointing finger, "he of Lucca named; 20
 And yonder face, beyond all others scarred,
 The holy Church as his own spouse hath claimed:
 From Tours was he, and doth by fast atone,
 Bolsena's eels, Vernaccia's vintage famed."
 And many others named he one by one, 25
 And all at being named seemed well content,
 So that I nowhere saw one gloomy frown.

10 Piccarda, the sister of Forese and Corso, probably a friend of Beatrice's, appears afterwards in *Par.* iii. 49. She had entered the convent of St. Clara at Florence, had been taken from it by force by her brother Corso and married to Rosellino della Tosa.

15 The use of Olympus for Paradise reminds us of the "Jove" of *C.* vi. 118.

19 Buonagiunta Urbiciani of Lucca is grouped in *V. E.* i. 13 with Brunetto Latini and others, as one whose poems had a touch of provincialism about them; *municipalia*, *non curialia*. Dante had known him apparently as a brother-poet, leading a somewhat voluptuous life, "a better critic," as *Benvenuto* puts it, "of wines than rhymes."

22 The Pope is Martin IV., who in 1281 succeeded Nicholas III. (*H.* xix. 46). He showed himself a strong partisan of the house of Anjou, and was therefore an enemy of the Ghibellines. Before his elevation he had been treasurer of the cathedral of Tours. Line 24 points to the special luxury invented by the Papal gourmet. The eels of the lake Bolsena near Viterbo were steeped in *vernaccia*, a white wine of Genoa, and then served in their own sauce. As with the lampreys of our own Henry I., the death of the Pope is said to have been caused by excess in his favourite dish.

I saw, as grinding teeth that foodless went,
 Ubaldin della Pil', and Boniface,
 Whose shepherd's staff o'er many a flock was bent; ³⁰
 I saw Messer Marchese, who found place
 Of yore to drink at Forli, then less dry,
 While yet his thirst insatiate grew apace.
 But e'en as he who looks and passes by
 This one for that, so Lucca's citizen, ³⁵
 Who most did seem to know me, drew mine eye.
 He murmured, and I know not if I then
 "Gentucca" heard, where wrung him the sharp pain
 Of that just doom that leaves them bare and lean.
 "O soul," said I, "whom strong wish doth constrain, ⁴⁰
 'Twould seem, to speak with me, let me hear thee,
 And let thy speech to thee and me bring gain."

²⁸ The picture of the teeth that bite only the empty air may have come from *Met.* viii. 826-829.

²⁹ Ubaldini is said by some early commentators to have been a brother of the Cardinal Octavian of *H.* x. 120, by others to have been the father of the Archbishop Ruggieri of *H.* xxxiii. 14. Pila was a castle belonging to the Ubaldini in the Casentino district of Tuscany. Of Boniface we know little. He has been identified with one of the Fieschi family, a nephew of Innocent IV., who in 1274 was chosen as Archbishop of Ravenna. The word *rocco* has been differently translated as a bishop's "rochet" or as a "pastoral staff." Ducange gives the former as the meaning of the Latin *roccus*; Diez (*s. v.*) gives the history of the word as coming from the Persian, meaning the "rook" or "castle" in a set of chessmen. The pastoral staff of the Archbishop of Ravenna is reported by Lana to have ended, not in the common curved form, but in a shape like that of the chess "rook," and this seems conclusive as to the meaning with which Dante used the word. It was used in this sense in mediæval French (Skeat *Etym. Dict.* s. v. *Rook*).

³¹ Marchese lies also in the dim obscure, but is supposed to have belonged to the Argugliosi of Forli, and to have been the grandfather of Bernardino da Polenta of Ravenna. He is said to have answered, when asked why he was always drinking, that it was because he was always thirsty (*Land.*).

³⁷ Most commentators take "Gentucca" as the name of a lady at Lucca, in whose sympathy Dante found comfort. Others, resting on the fact that there is no other instance of the name, take the word as a form of *gentuccia* = the Ghibelline populace. Troja (*Veltro*, p. 142) has, however, shown that there were two Luchese women of that name in the time of Dante, one the wife of Bernardo Morla Allucinghi, the other the daughter of another member of the same family, and so the natural interpretation is confirmed (*Faur.* i. 226; *Weg.* 242). Line 38 implies that the name came half-audible from between the famished lips of Buonagiunta. Whoever she may have been, it is in the highest degree improbable that Dante would have named her as and where he does, had his relation to her passed beyond the limits of an absolutely pure friendship, like in kind to that which he had felt for the "gentle lady" of *V. N.* c. 36.

"A maiden fair is born there," answered he,
 "Unveiled as yet, who'll make my city dear
 To thee, though on it men cast obloquy; 45
 Thou wilt speed on with this prevision clear.
 If in my murmuring thou didst error find,
 Through living facts the truth shall soon appear:
 But tell me if I see here him whose mind
 Gave birth to new-framed rhymes which thus
 began, 50
 'O ye who know what love is, ladies kind'?"
 And I to him: "Behold in me a man,
 Who, when love breathes, marks, striving to collect
 What it dictates, and sings it as he can."
 "Now brother!" spake he, "see I that defect 55
 Which me, the Notary, and Guittone barred
 From that style new and sweet thou didst affect.

43 The prophecy *ex eventu*, though it has been applied to the Alagia of C. xix. 142, or the *pargoletta* of C. xxxi. 5-9, can hardly be referred to any other than the Gentucca of l. 37, who in 1300 was a girl yet waiting for the "veil" of marriage, but who, when Dante visited the city twelve or fourteen years afterwards, was in the full bloom of married womanhood. Political commentators, clinging to the other interpretation of Gentucca, find in it a prediction of the excesses of one or other of the factions at Florence, who should drive Dante into exile, and make him prefer Lucca to his own city.

49 Buonagiunta had already recognised Dante, and the question, therefore, does not imply a doubt as to the identity. But was the *Vita Nuova* his? Had he written the Canzone the first line of which is quoted? For us the chief interest of the passage lies in the fact that Dante, in his maturer age (1314), looks back with satisfaction on this Canzone (C. ii.) as on that in which he recognised most distinctly the characteristic taste of his own genius, *sc.*, that he "sang what was in his heart" as "love taught him to sing" (*V. N.* c. 9, 24). For Buonagiunta's own poems, see *Rime Ant.* Venice, 1740, pp. 299-303.

56 The notary is Jacopo da Lentino (*circ.* 1250), of whom Dante speaks (*V. E.* i. 12) as having enriched Italian poetry with a more polished style than his predecessors. Sonnets and Canzoni by him are to be found in most collections of early Italian poetry (*Rime Ant.* pp. 304-321).

Guittone, commonly known as Fra Guittone (he belonged to the order of the Cavalieri Gaudenti; see *H.* xxiii. 103), was a poet of Arezzo. He left a wife and three children when he entered the Order, preached against the corruptions of the age, was banished from his own city, and died in Florence in 1294. He could scarcely fail to be known to Dante and the men of letters who were his friends, and probably was one of those whom the great poet first admired, then criticised, and then surpassed. He speaks of him (*V. E.* i. 13, ii. 6) as wanting in refinement, and in C. xxvi. 124 notes his popularity as an instance of the prevalence of fashion over judgment. Petrarch, however (*Trionf. d'Amor.* iv. 31), groups him with Cino da Pistoia, and even

Well do I now perceive how thy wings hard
 After that sweet dictator upward rose,
 Flight which to us the fates did not award; 60
 He who to please outside this limit goes,
 Indifferently looks on either style."
 Then, as content, he brought his speech to close.
 E'en as the birds that winter by the Nile
 Awhile in ordered squadron take their flight, 65
 Then flit in haste, and move in single file,
 So all the crowd who came within our sight,
 Turning their face, from us sped on apace
 At once by leanness and by keen wish light;
 And as the man who, tired of trotting pace, 70
 Lets his companions pass till he allay
 The panting of his lungs a little space,
 So all that holy flock in long array
 Forese let pass by, and with me went
 Behind, and said: "When com'st again this way?" 75
 "How long a span of life to me is lent,
 I know not," said I, "but on greater speed
 For that return my wishes will be bent,
 Seeing that the place where 'twas for me decreed
 To live, of good is day by day stript bare, 80
 And seems to shameful ruin to proceed."

with Dante himself (*Rime Ant.* pp. 243-268). Buonagiunta is made to acknowledge their inferiority and his own to the new style of Dante.

⁵⁹ The "dictator" (the word was probably chosen on account of its double meaning, as meaning "ruler" or "inspirer") is, of course, love, as in l. 54.

⁶¹ I have, with *Scart.*, followed the reading *gradire altri*, instead of *riguardar oltre*, "to look farther," as giving a better sense. The thought is, that he who writes from the desire of praise rather than as the interpreter of love, loses even the critical power which distinguishes a better style from a worse, or, adopting the reading *viene*, for *vede*, cannot pass from the one to the other. With a profound insight, Dante pointed out the canker which eats into the very life of the poet, and mars his whole work.

⁶⁴ The simile is suggested by the flight of cranes, as in *H.* v. 46.

⁷⁴ The old friend seeks to know when his brother-poet shall share with him in the task of purification. The question half reminds us of *John* xxi. 21, the answer of *Phil.* i. 23. Desire would fain anticipate the decrees of God, and take refuge on the further shore from the evils which were coming on himself and on his city.

"Go now," said he, "for him with largest share
 Of guilt, I see at tail of beast dragged on,
 Towards the vale where no sins cleansèd are.
 At every step that beast more speed hath won, 85
 Increasing, till it deal its mortal wound,
 And leave his corpse to death most foully done.
 Not long have yonder spheres to go their round,"
 He raised his eyes to Heaven: "ere clear to thee
 Shall be what speech no clearer may expound. 90
 Now stay thou here; so precious moments be
 Here in this kingdom that too much I lose,
 In walking on with thee so equally."
 As oft a knight his headlong course pursues,
 And gallops on in front of all the rest, 95
 And honour in the fight's first onset woos,
 So he with paces longer from us pressed,
 And I with those same two behind remained,
 Who o'er the world such marshalship possessed.
 And when he had so far the distance gained, 100
 That mine eyes followed on his form to gaze,
 As did my mind on what his words contained,

82 Forese foretells the death of his own brother Corso. *Vill.* (viii. 42, 49, 68, 96) tells the tale thus. In 1304 the tide of popular feeling at Florence turned against him. In 1308 he was condemned as a traitor; defended himself against the officers and people who were sent to take him; at last took flight. He was overtaken and captured by officers who had been sent after him; he slipped from his horse in the hope of escaping; one of the officers wounded him with a spear, and he was taken into the neighbouring abbey of San Salvi, where he died and was buried. Such was the end of the "great baron" of Florence, who had, through his whole career, been Dante's chief enemy. Dante had either heard a more highly coloured version of the story, or, after his manner, as in *H.* v. and xxxiii., pictures to himself what must have been. The "valley" is that of *H.* iv. 8; *Par.* xvii. 137. Even Forese is made to pass that judgment on his brother's fate.

94 Possibly a reminiscence of Campaldino, such as we have met in *C.* v. 92; *H.* xxii. 1, 9.

99 I have used the word "marshalship" as the exact equivalent of Dante's "*mariscalchi*." The word had risen from its original meaning of "groom" ("mare's servant") to that of high military rank. Rhyme probably suggested the word; choice accepted it as the fittest that could be used. *Comp. Skeat, Et. Dict. sc.*

101 He saw Forese indistinctly as he passed into the distance, and with a like indistinctness followed the meaning of his words.

Behold, another tree its boughs displays
 Fruit-laden, full of life, not distant too,
 For only then we thither turned our ways. 103
 Raising their hands a people came in view
 Beneath it, and towards its leaves they cried,
 I know not what, as eager fond boys do,
 Who pray, what he they pray to hath denied,
 But, as to make their wishes yet more keen, 110
 Holds up the longed-for prize and doth not hide.
 Then went they on, as though the trick were seen,
 And we now came towards that lofty tree,
 Which to such tears and prayers so deaf had
 been.
 "Pass on your way, nor nearer draw; the tree 115
 Whereof Eve ate the fruit is found more high,
 And this from that draws its nativity."
 Thus one I knew not from the boughs did cry;
 So Virgil, Statius, I, our course pursued,
 Where the hill upward slopes, in company. 120
 "Remember," then he said, "the cursèd brood,
 Of clouds begotten, who, with wine o'erspent,
 With twy-form breasts had Theseus fain subdued:
 Those Hebrews also who to drink low bent,
 Whom Gideon spurned as comrades in the fight, 125
 When he to Midian down the hill-side went."

¹⁰³ The tree was different from that of C. xxii. 130, and, as stated in l. 116, was a scion of the tree of knowledge. The souls still crave for its fruit, but here the voice which comes from the tree, as from its guardian angel, is that of stern prohibition. They must drink of Lethe and Eunoe and eat of the fruit of the tree of life first. The knowledge which makes men as gods requires wisdom as a safeguard.

¹²¹ The voice tells of those who had sinned through excess: (1) of the Centaurs, sons of Ixion and the Clouds (*Met.* viii. 7), who were invited to the marriage-feast of Peirithous and Hippodamia, and, when flushed with insolence and wine, sought to carry off the bride. As in the bas-reliefs of the Elgin Marbles, they were repelled and slain by Theseus (*Met.* xii. 210-535; *Hor. Od.* i. 18). The "twy-form breasts" are those of man and horse.

¹²⁴ The classical example is matched from Scripture (*Judg.* vi. 11, vii. 25).

So keeping still one margin near in sight
 We onward went; and heard of crimes of sense,
 On which there followed gain of wretched plight.
 Then on the lonely road with free course thence, 130
 A thousand steps or more we took our way,
 Without a word, each plunged in thought intense.
 "Why do ye three alone thus pensive stray?"
 A voice said on the sudden, and I turned,
 As horses do, when smitten with dismay. 135
 I raised my head, that so might be discerned
 Who it was spake, and never furnace fire,
 Or glass, or metals, with such red glow burned,
 As I saw one who said, "If ye desire
 Upward to pass, ye needs must turn this way; 140
 This is his path who doth to peace aspire."
 His aspect dread had ta'en my sight away,
 Wherefore I turned to those my teachers wise,
 As one who, as he heareth, on doth stray;
 And e'en as comes, proclaiming day's clear rise, 145
 The breeze of May, with odours fresh and sweet
 Impregnate, that from grass and flowers arise,
 So felt I then the breath of Zephyr meet
 My brow, and heard of wings the rustling sound,
 Wafting ambrosial gales the sense to greet, 150
 And heard it say, "Blest are they who abound
 In light of grace, that so their appetite
 Rouse no desire within, o'erpassing bound,
 Hungering within the limits of the right."

¹²⁹ The "gains" were, for Eve, the loss of Paradise; for the Centaurs, death; for the Hebrews, exclusion from the glory of victory.

¹³⁴ The voice came from the Angel of Abstinence, whom Dante sees glowing with a brightness like that of *Ezek. i. 7*; *Dan. x. 6*; *Rev. i. 15*. He points to the entrance of the seventh circle.

¹⁴⁵ Beautiful as is the picture, we must remember that it is meant to be a symbol of the clear brightness and sweetness of the temperate life. The breeze that strikes on Dante's brow effaces another of the seven P's as he passes out of the Circle of the Gluttonous. His thoughts of ambrosia were drawn from *Virg. Georg. iv. 415*; *Æn. i. 403*.

¹⁵¹ The closing words are a paraphrase of *Matt. v. 6*, the meaning being somewhat altered, as though it stood, "Blessed are they who hunger and

The Mysteries of Man's first and second Births—The Sins of Lust

'T WAS time without delay we journeyed on,
 For now on the meridian line the day
 Was marked by Taurus, night by Scorpion.
 Wherefore, as one is wont who will not stay,
 But wends his way, whatever may appear, 5
 If spur of need pricks hard against delay,
 So entered we upon the winding stair,
 Each before other as the gap we clomb,
 So narrow that it parts the climbers there;
 And, like the nestling stork that longs to roam, 10
 And lifts its wing and lets it droop again,
 And ventures not to leave its sheltering home,
 So was I with a wish that burnt amain
 To ask, and then was quenched, until at last
 I showed as one whose lips to speak are fain; 15
 And my sweet Father, though our pace was fast,
 Forebore not, but spake then: "Discharge the bow
 Of speech, wherein the steel the wood hath passed."
 Then opened I my mouth without ado,
 And thus began: "But how can men grow thin 20
 Where they no need of nourishment can know?"
 "If thou with Meleager wouldst begin,"
 Said he, "life wasting with the wasted brand,
 This would not be so hard for thee to win;

thirst righteously" ("*secundum justitiam*," *Vulg.*), whose higher appetite regulates their lower.

¹ As in other like passages (C. ix. 1-9, xix. 1-4), I content myself with the result that the astronomical facts indicate the hour of 2 P.M. The fact that less than half the day remained leads the pilgrims to press on.

⁹ *Comp. Matt.* vii. 14. Each one must take the upward path alone. Repentance and purification exclude at times even the blessing of companionship.

¹⁰ One remembers how common an object the stork is in Italian and Swiss cities. In the timidity of the fledgling's desire to fly Dante finds a parable of his own desire to know. The problem is, to account for the fact of the leanness of hunger where life no longer exists under the same conditions as of old.

²² The instance of Meleager (*Met.* viii. 451-525) furnishes an argument

Or wouldst reflect how to your wave of hand' 25
 The mirror's image waving too doth move,
 What now seems hard were light to understand.
 But that thou gain the ease thy will doth love,
 Lo, here is Statius ; him I call, and pray
 That he a healer of thy wounds may prove." 30
 "If I to him the eternal things display,"
 Then answered Statius, "e'en when thou art nigh,
 Let me plead this, I cannot say thee nay."
 Then he began : "My sòn, the words that I 35
 Shall utter let thy watchful mind record ;
 They to the 'How?' thou ask'st will light supply.
 Blood in its perfect state, which still is stored,
 And ne'er is drunk up by the thirsty veins,
 Like viands which thou takest from the board,

from analogy. His life had depended, not on the common laws of nutrition, but, as the Fates had decreed, on the burning of a firebrand which his mother had snatched from the hearth at the time of his birth, and, in her wrath at his slaughter of her brothers when he grew to manhood, threw into the fire. As it was consumed, so was he. We smile at Ovid's tale being dealt with as a fact. Did Dante so deal with it, or did he only refer to it as showing what was conceivable?

24 The argument from fable is followed by one from the laws of reflection, on which Dante, like Roger Bacon, loved to dwell (*Par.* ii. 97-105). The implied thought is that in reality the body, especially the modified body after death, is the mirror of the soul, shares its movements and reproduces its changes.

28 We ask why the physiological theory which follows is put into the mouth of Statius and not of Virgil. The answer probably is that the latter was thought of as the representative of ethical and political wisdom, but that the higher mysteries of the life of the body in its relation to the soul belong to the former as illumined by the light of revealed truth.

31 I follow the reading *veduta* (=that which is seen) rather than *vendetta*, which is entirely out of harmony with the context.

37 Of all the digressions in the *Comm.*, this, and that on the nature of the spots on the moon in *Par.* ii., seem the least in place. To enter into Dante's thoughts, we must enter into the tendency, which he shared with Latini and others, of which we have an example in the *Conv.*, to something like a display, which in a later age would have been ostentatious, of a wide encyclopædic knowledge. In *Conv.* iv. 21, especially, we note how he, as a student of natural science, was fascinated by the mysteries of embryology, as he found them either in Aristotle (*de Gen. Anim.*), or Albert of Cologne, or Aquinas (*Summ.* i. qu. 99). The lecture deals, however, with higher problems than those of physiology. Lines 70-72 give Dante's judgment on the questions of Traducianism or creation, as connected with the soul. As in C. xvi. 85-90, *Par.* vii. 142, he decides in favour of the latter.

There, in the heart, from all men's members gains 40
 Creative force, as that which doth the same
 Repair, while circling, it that power attains ;
 Again concoct, in parts which not to name
 Is best, it flows, and then is poured upon
 Another's blood in vase of Nature's frame. 45
 There this and that together meet as one,
 This apt to work, that passive to receive
 What this from its perfected source hath won.
 Thus joined, at once it worketh to conceive,
 Coagulating first, then breathing life 50
 In that where it doth form to matter give.
 The active virtue then, with soul-powers rife,
 As of a plant—just so far different
 That that moves on its way, this ends its strife,—
 Doth then so work that to the same extent 55
 As a sea-fungus it doth move, feel, show
 Its power to frame the organs whence 'twas sent.
 And now, my son, is seen to spread and grow
 The virtue of his heart who generates,
 Where Nature's care o'er every limb doth flow. 60
 But how the living soul with reason mates
 Thou see'st not yet ; this point it is which one,
 Wiser than thou art, erring much, misstates,

41 The phrase "informing power" is essentially characteristic of mediæval thought. It implies the possession, in that of which it is predicated, of the power of reproducing all from which it was supposed to be derived. All the form (in both senses of the word) of the human body was already there potentially.

43 The "perfected source" is the heart, from which, as in l. 41, the blood, and that which is formed from it, receive their "informing power."

51 The "matter" is thought of as supplied by the female, the "form" by the male. The whole passage is hardly more than a paraphrase of Aquinas (*Summ.* i. 98. 1, iii. 33. 1). The term "coagulating" comes from the *Vulg.* of *Job* x. 10 ; *Wisd.* vii. 2.

55 The human life begins with the lower life of the plant, or rather of the zoophyte (l. 57), with this difference, that the latter has reached its appointed goal ; the former is in process of evolution.

61 The question then comes, how does the plant or lower animal life develop into the human? On this point Dante rejects the teaching of Averrhoes, who held what is known as the theory of Traducianism, *i.e.*, that the soul was transmitted by the parent as well as the corporeal life, and

So that his teaching sets apart, alone,
 Potential reason from the living soul, 65
 Seeing no organ that it makes its own.
 Now open thy breast to truth that I unroll,
 And learn that soon as in the embryo
 The structure of the brain becomes a whole,
 Then the Prime Mover turns to it, and lo ! 70
 Glad at such art of Nature, breatheth in
 A spirit new, whose potencies o'erflow ;
 For what it there finds active it doth win
 To its own substance, and one soul is made,
 Which lives, and feels, itself itself within. 75
 And that thou wonder less at what was said,
 See how the sun's heat generateth wine,
 Into the juice that flows from vine conveyed.
 When Lachesis hath run out all her line,
 It from the flesh is freed, and, as of right, 80
 Bears with itself the human and divine.

adopts that of Creationism, held by Aquinas (*l. c.*) and mediæval theologians generally, *i. e.*, that the soul or intellect of man had its origin in a direct creative act. The "possible intellect" was the "universal mind," the intellect of God, "possible," as containing the potency of all human intellectual energy, which alone has immortality. Averrhoes, finding no special organ in the body for the intellect, as the eye is the instrument of sight and the ear of hearing, assumed that man's intellect was in fact the Divine Mind working within self-imposed limits. From the standpoint of Aquinas and Dante, it seemed (1) that this view involved Pantheism, and therefore the denial of man's personality, and (2) that it followed from it that when the working of the universal intellect ceased at death, there was no soul to survive as the heir of immortality (*Ozan.* p. 419; Renan, *Averroës*, p. 122 *et seq.*, 117. 1; Aquin. *c. Gent.* ii. 73; *Summ.* i. 86. 2, 118. 2).

⁶⁹ We note (1) that Dante views the soul as coming from a direct divine inbreathing into the body made ready for the act of the first Mover (*Par.* vii. 142, xxxiii. 145); (2) that, anticipating modern physiology, he finds in the brain that which is as much the organ of the soul as the eye and the ear are of their respective senses. *Comp. C.* xvi. 85-90. The spirit unites itself in the embryo with the lower life, which it finds already in activity, and becomes the soul, which lives as the plant lives, feels as the animal feels, and reflects, *i. e.*, possesses the self-consciousness which is the peculiar attribute of humanity. As an analogue of that union, with a profound thought which reminds us almost of Drummond's *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, Dante points to one of the parables of Nature. The heat of the sun combines with that of the unripe grape to form the wine, but the wine is not afterwards resolvable into those two elements. So when life comes to an end, when Lachesis ceases to spin (*C.* xxi. 25), it carries with it, and "as of right" (I take this as the best equivalent to the "*in virtute*"

And all the other powers are silent quite,
 But memory, intelligence, and will
 Are found in act with more than former might.
 Then without pause it passeth on, until 85
 It marvellously reacheth either shore,
 And then first knows what path awaits it still.
 Soon as that clime doth compass it all o'er,
 The virtue formative rays out around,
 As much as when the living limbs it bore. 90
 And, as the air, when rainy mists abound,
 By rays of alien light which it reflects,
 Is seen with many-tinted colours crowned,
 So then the air around the soul collects
 Into that form which on it hath imprest 95
 The soul that stays, whose virtue this effects.
 And, in like manner as the flame's thin crest
 Follows the fire wherever it may rove,
 So is the soul with that new garment drest ;

of the original), the human and divine elements, henceforth indissolubly united.

⁸² In fact, however, the faculties which depend on the bodily organs are inactive without those organs, or analogous organs which supply their place, while the mental powers, memory, intelligence, will, are more active than before. This would involve in the purely incorporeal state of the departed soul the cessation of all feeling, and therefore, even then, before the resurrection of the body, it is clothed as with a new corporeity, adapted to the intermediate state, as the "spiritual body" of 1 *Cor.* xv. 42-44 will be to that of the resurrection.

⁸⁵ The process of that clothing is described. As soon as the soul knows after death, as it stands before the Judge (*H.* v. 7), whether Hell or Paradise is its appointed home, the "informing power" (l. 41) comes into play again, as it had done before, impresses upon the air that surrounds it its own form, as the sun impresses its colours upon mists, and takes a shadowy simulacrum of its former body, that can see, hear, feel as that body had done, though it lacks the attribute of solidity. Such is Dante's theory of the intermediate state, based, in this instance, on Plato and the Alexandrian fathers, rather than on Augustine or Aquinas (iii. *Suppl.* 71. 79. lxxxix. art. lxx. 1-3).

⁹⁷ Yet another analogy presents itself. Where there is a centre of fire, the flame that issues from it follows it, and thus the shadow-body follows the soul to which it is attached. So the soul sees and feels, weeps and sighs, speaks and sings, through its new organ, and the new garment of the soul, sharing its emotion, can present the appearance of emaciation, which answers to the spiritual condition of the soul that hungers and thirsts after righteousness, and which, in l. 20, had been the starting-point of the digression.

Wherefore with outward gait it moveth thence, 100
 And as a shade is known, and thus doth frame,
 Even to sight, the organs of each sense.
 So is it that we speech and laughter claim,
 So is it that we form the tears and sighs
 That on the Mountain to thy hearing came. 105
 According as desires within us rise,
 And other feelings, so is formed the shade,
 And hence comes that which caused thee such
 surprise."
 To the last turning now our way we made,
 And then we, winding to the right hand, went, 110
 Our eager thoughts by yet a new care swayed.
 There from the bank a fiery flame is sent,
 And upwards doth the cornice breathe a blast
 By which far off 'tis driven and backward bent ;
 Hence on the open side, perforce, we passed, 115
 In single file, on this side of the flame
 Afraid, on that with fear to fall aghast.
 And my Guide said, " Here need we that we tame
 Our wandering eyes with tightened curb and
 rein,
 For one false step might make us miss our aim." 120
 "*Summæ Deus clementiæ*" was the strain
 I heard from out the depth of that great heat,
 Which not the less did me to turn constrain ;

¹⁰⁹ I have taken the word *tortura* (with Scart. and Butl.) in its etymological sense rather than as=torment, which it came to have in later Italian. The pilgrims have reached the highest circle of the Mountain, in which the sin of impurity finds its discipline, and there is no farther ascent. The mountain side breathes forth flame; from the cornice or edge of the path comes a strong wind, and the travellers have to walk between the two. The wind coming from the circle which has just been passed may represent, as it were, the atmosphere of temperance, which is one condition of the attainment of purity. In such a path it is needful to walk warily.

¹²¹ As elsewhere, it is the hymn as a whole, rather than the single line quoted, which commends itself to the poet's choice. In the modern Breviary of the Latin Church a hymn is found in the Matins for Saturday which begins "*Summæ Parens clementiæ*," and two of its verses may be quoted as showing why Dante chose it:—

And I saw spirits through the red flame fleet;
 Wherefore, with glances parted here and there, 125
 I looked at them, and then at mine own feet.
 And, hard on that which closed their hymn of prayer,
 They cried aloud, "Behold, I know not man,"
 And then their hymn renewed in low voice clear;

*"Nostros, piis cum canticis,
 Fletus benigne suscipe,
 Ut corde puro sordium
 Te perfruemur largius.
 Lumbos jecurque morbidum
 Flammis adure congruis,
 Accincti ut artus excubent
 Luxu remoto pessimo."*

I add a somewhat free translation—

We pray Thee, Lord, accept the bitter tears
 Which we, with holy songs, pour full and free,
 That, with a heart where nothing foul appears,
 We share the joy of those who gaze on Thee.
 O burn Thou up with well-attempered fires
 The heart diseased, the passions base within,
 That, with loins girt and purified desires,
 We stand on guard against each lustful sin.

A hymn beginning exactly in Dante's words is found in the Roman Breviary for the Feast of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin (*Scart.*), but the one that has been quoted lends itself so much more to his purpose that there can scarcely be a doubt that this was what he meant to quote. A slip of memory or a various reading may account for the "*Deus*" instead of "*parens*."

¹²⁷ The hymn ends with a doxology. The verse which follows those already quoted may have been in Dante's mind.

*"Quicumque ut horas noctium
 Nunc concinendo rumpimus,
 Ditemur omnes affatim
 Donis beatæ patriæ."*

Grant that all we, who now with anthems clear
 Cast off the drowsy spell of night's long rest,
 May share in fullest measure, free from fear,
 The gifts of that dear land where dwell the blest.

We note (l. 124) that fire is the instrument of purifying discipline from the sins of lust, as in *II. xv.* it had been of simply retributive punishment for those who had no capacity for the former. In that case also it is symbolic. The new fire must burn out the old. So Virgil (*Æn. vi. 740*)—

*"Aliis sub gurgite vasto
 Infectum eluitur scelus, aut exuritur igni."*

¹²⁸ The words of the Virgin (*Luke i. 34*) become the ideal pattern of chastity, as of the other graces opposed to the seven deadly sins, of which those of

And that too ended, they cried out, "Dian 130
 Turned to the wood, thence Helice to chase,
 Since through her veins the taint of Venus ran ;"
 And then they turned to sing, and sang the praise
 Of ladies and of husbands who were chaste,
 As those whom virtue in their wedlock sways. 135
 And this tune is enough, I trow, to last,
 Through all the time they suffer in the fire;
 With such care and such diet is effaced,
 As need is, the last wound of ill desire.

The Sins of Lust—Guido Guinicelli—Arnould Daniel

WHILE on the margin onward thus we went
 In single file, my Master often spake:
 "Take heed; for good be this admonishment."
 On my right shoulder then the sunbeams brake,
 And with their rays changed all the western sky, 5
 And bade the azure a new whiteness take;

sensual passion are the last and worst. Dante follows in the footsteps of Bonaventura (*Speculum. B. V. M. c. 4*).

¹³⁰ As elsewhere, Dante mingles, with a union which to us seems strange, but which was natural to him, the lessons of classical mythology with those of the Gospel. Diana's holy horror when she discovered the fall of Helice (= Callisto), who had been seduced by Jupiter, marked her out also as the ideal of a pure womanhood (*Met. ii. 441-465*). One line of that passage was, it may be, prominent in Dante's thoughts—

"Heu quam difficile est crimen non prodere vultu."

In *Par. xxxi. 32* we have another allusion to the same myth.

¹³⁴ The spirits recall the examples, not only of the purity of an ascetic, but of those who, in the observance of the divine law, had shown that marriage also has its ideal of chastity, both for man and woman.

¹³⁹ The "last wound" is that of sensual desire—the P still uneffaced on Dante's brow. The scorching fire and the hymns are the regimen which works out the patient's cure.

¹⁻⁶ The description of dawn may be compared with *C. ii. 6-9*. Both seem to tell of one whose habit of soul it was to "watch for the morning."

And with my shadow ruddier yet did I
 Make the flame glow; and then that portent new
 Full many shades I saw, in passing, eye.
 And this led them fresh converse to pursue, 10
 Speaking of me, and thus their words did frame
 To say: "In this no body false we view."
 Then, towards me turning, certain of them came
 Far as they could, yet ever with due care
 Lest they should pass beyond the burning flame: 15
 "O thou who, not, perchance, through sloth, dost
 fare
 Behind the others, but through reverence,
 Answer to me who thirst in this fire's glare;
 Nor to me only must thou speech dispense,
 For all thou see'st thirst more thy words to hear 20
 Than for cool stream doth Æthiop's parchèd sense.
 Tell us how 'tis thou dost thyself uprear
 As wall against the sun, as though not yet
 'Thou didst within the net of death appear?"
 So one then spake, and I had straightway set 25
 Myself to show it, had I not been led
 To gaze on wonder new that mine eyes met;
 For through the mid-path, glowing fiery red,
 A troop took, face to face with them, their way,
 Which made me gaze yet more astonishèd. 30
 Then on each side I saw each shade display
 Much haste, and each to kiss the other sped,
 Nor made, content with greeting brief, delay.

¹⁰ Comp. C. v. 25. We note the keen eye of the observer of all phenomena of light. The shadow falling on flame is not seen in its full outline, but it makes the flame seem redder. The spirits in the fire are conscious of this, and feel that it comes from a body which is unlike their own.

¹⁴ The souls will not interrupt their progress to purity even for a moment, but are eager to know how it is that Dante's body casts a shadow.

³² The kiss which is part of the process of a growing purity must be thought of as after the pattern of a kiss of peace, the kiss of charity (*Rom.* xvi. 16; *1 Cor.* xvi. 20; *1 Pet.* v. 14, *et al.*). What had been the expression and the stimulus of impure desire was now the kiss of chaste affection.

So oft, within their dusk-brown host, proceed
 This ant and that, till muzzle muzzle meet, 25
 Spying their way, or how affairs succeed.
 Soon as they cease each other thus to greet,
 Ere the first step they take in separate way,
 Each to outcry the other's voice is fleet.
 "Lo! Sodom and Gomorrah," these did say; 40
 The other, "In the cow went Pasiphè,
 That so the bull might do its wanton play."
 And then as cranes which this and that way flee,
 Or to Riphæan hills or parchèd sand,
 From frost these, sun those, seeking to be free, 45
 One troop departs, comes on the other band,
 And turn in bitter tears to their first song,
 And to the cry their several sins demand;
 And, as before, they did around me throng,
 The very same who came with their request, 50
 With looks that told how they to hear did long.
 And I, who twice had seen their eager quest,
 Began to speak: "O happy souls, secure,
 Whene'er it come, of state of peaceful rest,
 Nor as a timely fruit nor premature, 55
 My limbs are yonder left, but here with me
 They with their blood and jointed frame endure.

³⁴ The similitude may have grown out of the poet's own keen habits of observation, but parallels present themselves in *Æn.* iv. 404; *Met.* vii. 624-626. Line 36 seems almost to anticipate Huber or Sir John Lubbock, or the striking passage on ants in Ken's *Hymnotheo* (*Works* iii. 11-13).

⁴⁰ The words point to the extremest form of debasement (*Gen.* xix.; *H.* xii. 12, 13), to which all sensual passion tends, brutalising those who yield to it. *Comp.* l. 82.

⁴³ For the Riphæan Mountains, probably the Ural chain, see Virgil, *Georg.* i. 240, iv. 518. As a fact in natural history, cranes would hardly be seen at the same time flying in opposite directions, but each of the two bands of spirits so moving brought back to his mind the picture of such a flight. *Comp.* C. xxiv. 64; *H.* v. 40.

⁵³ If it seem strange that such words should be spoken of souls stained with such sins, we may remember St. Paul's "Such were some of you" (*1 Cor.* vi. 11).

From hence I climb, no longer blind to be;
 A gracious Lady gives that grace on high;
 Thus through your world I bear mortality. 60
 So may your greatest longing satisfy
 Itself full soon, and may ye that Heaven gain
 Which, filled with love, expands through widest sky,
 Tell me, that I on paper write it plain,
 Who ye may be, and who that multitude 65
 Which, to your back turned, turns its back again ? ”
 Not otherwise the mountaineer, subdued
 By wonder, dazed and silent, looks around,
 If, rough and rustic, he in towns intrude,
 Than every spirit then in mien was found; 70
 But when they were from that amazement freed,
 Which in high hearts soon ceases to astound,
 “ O blest art thou who in our coasts dost read,”
 Resumed he then who first had made request,
 “ Full proof how men to better life proceed ! ” 75
 The troop that comes not with us have transgressed
 In that which brought of old on Cæsar’s ear
 The cry of ‘ Queen ! ’ his triumph to molest;
 Therefore their cry of ‘ Sodom ! ’ thou dost hear,
 As they depart, in words of self-despite, 80
 And by their shame the fire make more severe.
 The sin that stains us was hermaphrodite ;
 But because we broke through all human law,
 Following, like beasts, each passing appetite,

⁵⁹ The “gracious lady” is not Beatrice, but the Blessed Virgin (*H.* ii. 94).

⁶³ The empyrean, which lies outside the planetary and crystalline spheres, and in its perfect calm is thought of as the home of the blessed (*Conv.* ii. 4 ; Aquin. *Summ.* i. 70. 3, 102. 2).

⁶⁴ The request implies (1) that the penitents should not shrink from the open confession of their sin ; (2) that Dante’s wish is to make known on earth, for the comfort of their friends, that they are on their way to Paradise.

⁷⁶ The sin of the one company is told in all plainness of speech. Line 77 refers to the scandalous stories which were told of Cæsar’s youth in the court of Nicomedes of Bithynia, and of which the rude jests of soldiers and senators at times reminded him (Sueton. *Jul. Cæs.* c. 49).

⁸² The strange words have led to many conjectures, some of them taking us into a chamber of horrors, like those of Capreæ. A simpler explanation

In very scorn of self, as we withdraw, 85
 We speak her name whom bestial lust did call
 Within the wooden monster's bestial maw.
 Now knowest thou our acts and whence our fall ;
 If thou our names wouldst know and who we are
 There is not time, nor do I know them all. 90
 But if thou wish I will myself declare :
 I Guido Guinicelli am, and so
 Am cleansed, because I mourned while death was far."
 E'en as they were who in Lycurgus' woe
 Rushed, those two sons, their mother to behold, 95
 So did I,—but so far I did not go,
 When I thus heard his name who was of old
 My sire and theirs, my country's nobler men,
 Skilled to use love-rhymes sweet and manifold.

is also the truer. The sin described is that of natural passion as contrasted with unnatural, the sin of Hermes and Aphrodite, the types of male and female ("materque paterque," *Met.* iv. 290), of Paolo and Francesca; but the natural passion is illicitly indulged, breaks through the restraints of reason and of the laws that are meant for man, as having a higher life than beasts, and therefore becomes as simply animal as the degradation indicated by the name which they repeat as a confession that they too had acted as "brute beasts that have no understanding." The Marriage Service Exhortation, from which those words are taken, sets forth the ideal of the true relation of the man and the woman, which lust desecrates. *Comp. Pet. Lomb. Sentt.* iv. *dist.* 26-42; *Aquin. Summ.* ii. 2, 151-156.

⁹² The rest of the Canto has the interest of being a fuller contribution to Dante's mental autobiography (for his spiritual confessions see C. xxx., xxxi.) than we find elsewhere. Guido Guinicelli (*f.* circ. 1250, *d.* 1276) was a scholar, priest, poet, of Bologna. Dante names him in *V. E.* i. 15 as the greatest of the Bolognese poets (*comp.* C. xi. 97), and in *H.* v. 100 reproduces the leading thought of one of his *Canzoni*—

"Al cor gentil ripara sempre Amore."

Here he recognises him as his master in poetry. *Comp. Fauriel* i. 262; *Rim. Ant.* p. 288.

⁹⁴ The story of the sons of Lycurgus, Thoas and Eunæus, comes from Statius (*Theb.* v. 721 *et seq.*), and has been already referred to (C. xxii. 112). They recognised their mother in an unlooked-for meeting, and then—

"Per tela manusque
 Irruerunt matremque avidis complexibus ambo
 Diripiunt flentes, alternaque pectora mutant."

So Dante says he acted when he knew that he stood in the presence of his instructor and father in the poet's art.

⁹⁸ The poet had, it would seem, conquered the pride which had once led him to exalt himself, and now looks back on the singers of the past as better

Nor hearing aught nor speaking, sorrowing then, 100
 Long time I walked with gaze upon him bent,
 The fire still hindering near approach, and when
 My look had fed on him with full content,
 I gave myself to render service due,
 With that assurance which commands assent. 105
 And he to me : "Thou leav'st such traces true
 In me from what I hear, and all so clear,
 That Lethe cannot blot nor dim their hue ;
 But if thy words the very truth did swear,
 Tell me the reason why thou now dost show 110
 By look and word thou holdest me so dear ?"
 And I to him : "Thy songs, that sweetly flow,
 Which, long as this our modern use shall last,
 Shall still endear the ink that made them grow."
 "O brother," said he, pointing as one passed, 115
 "He, whom with finger I mark out to thee,
 Me in the craft of mother speech surpassed ;
 In songs of love and prose romances he
 Surpassed them all ; let then the babblers say
 They give the Limousin the victory ; 120

than himself. The words confirm the view which I have taken of C. xi. 99. It may be that in specifying "love-rhymes" as the things in which he walked in their steps, there is a latent consciousness that he was now treading the "*avia Pieridum loca*," in which none had gone before him.

113 The "modern use" is that of writing in the *lingua volgare*, Provençal or Italian, of which there had been no examples till within one hundred and fifty years of Dante's time (*V. N. c.* 25). Pier delle Vigne (*H. xiii.* 58), who flourished in Frederick II.'s court at Palermo, the Emperor himself also being a poet, was one of the earliest of the Sicilian school.

116 Guinicelli also has learnt the lesson of humility, and points to Arnaucl Daniel as a greater poet than himself. Arnaucl, as the sequel shows, was a Provençal poet. Dante (*V. E. ii.* 10) looks to him also as his master, and Petrarch (*Tri. Am. iv.* 40-42) places him among the foremost poets of his time. He was said to have been the inventor of the *Sestina*, perhaps of the *Terza Rima* also. Sixteen of his *Canzoni* have come down to us (*Diez, Troub.* pp. 344-360). He also wrote a romance of Lancelot of the Lake, which may have been that read by Paolo and Francesca (*H. v.* 107). The fact that he and Guinicelli are found in this circle shows that they were not free from the sensual vices of their time.

120 The Limousin is Gerard de Bornello of Limoges, or rather, perhaps, of the province Limousin, lying to the west of Auvergne, of whom Dante speaks (*V. E. ii.* 2) as being, like himself, the "poet of righteousness," Arnaucl

To clamour more than truth they homage pay,
 And thus it is they form their estimate
 Ere art and reason find to them their way.
 So many did of old Guittone rate ;
 Now this voice and now that praised him alone, 125
 Till truth had with the many greater weight.
 Now, if to thee such special grace be shown
 That thou hast leave that cloister-home to gain
 Where Christ as abbot of the house is known,
 Say for me there one Paternoster plain, 130
 So far as in this world of ours we need,
 Where power to sin no longer doth remain."
 And then, as if perchance his place to cede
 To one behind, he vanished in the flame,
 Like fish that to the water's depth recede. 135
 Nigh unto him he pointed at I came,
 And said my heart was longing to enfold,
 In home that gave it welcome, that his name.
 Then he began free speech with me to hold :
 "So pleases me thy courteous request, 140
 I neither can nor will leave that untold.
 Arnould am I, who sing, with grief opprest,
 All my past folly, as now meets thine eye,
 And joyous see before me hope's day blest.

being the poet of love, and as standing, in Dante's estimate, on a higher level as a writer.

¹²¹ The poet passes judgment, as in C. xxiv. 58-60, on the critics who followed, not the true rules of art, but the fashion of the day.

¹²⁴ Guittone of Arezzo is named as another instance of misplaced praise. Comp. C. xxiv. 56.

¹²⁷ The cloister of which Christ is abbot is, of course, Paradise. It is characteristic of Dante that he sees in the ideal pattern of monastic life, in spite of its actual corruptions, the earthly type of the communion of saints. Comp. *Par.* xi. 99.

¹³¹ The limitation is that already indicated in C. xi. The souls in Purgatory had no need of the prayer "Lead us not into temptation."

¹⁴⁰ The words of Arnould in the original are given in Provençal. As might be expected in Italian copyists ignorant of that language, the MSS. abound in variations and errors. The version I have given is based upon the text given by *Scart.* from *Diez, Troub.* p. 347. One v. l. in l. 147, *temprar for temps de*, would give, "Think thou on me to soothe my agony." Another in l. 146 gives, "Which guides thee without cold or scorching airs ;

And now I pray thee, by the Virtue high 145
 That leads thee to the summit of the stairs,
 In due time think thou of my agony."
 Then to the cleansing fire his form repairs.

CANTO XXVII

*The fiery Furnace—The Slumber on the Mountain—The
 Vision of Leah—Virgil's Farewell*

EVEN as when he darts his earliest rays
 There where his Maker shed for us His blood,
 While Ebro's stream 'neath lofty Libra stays,
 And Ganges feels its heat at noon renewed,
 So stood the sun ; and thus the day was o'er, 5
 When God's great angel glad before us stood.
 Outside the flame, toward the edge he bore,
 And then "*Beati mundo corde*" sang,
 With voice that had of life than ours far more.
 And then, "No path is here unless the pang 10
 Of fire ye feel, O holy souls ; pass on,
 Not deaf to that clear song that yonder rang."

but that is at variance with what follows in C. xxvii. The "past folly" of l. 143 is the sensuality which Arnould was now expiating.

¹ It was sunrise at Jerusalem, sunset on the Mountain of Purgatory, noon (the Nones of the Church's day, *i.e.*, 12 to 3) on the Ganges, midnight on the Ebro. The two latter points are reckoned by the poet-astronomer as 90° east and west respectively from Jerusalem. We see Dante, as it were, with his sphere before him. For the existence of such globes in the 13th century, see *Lacroix*, pp. 104-114. There is, perhaps, as Peter Dante notes, a symbolic meaning in the fact that the discipline comes at the hour so often given to the works of darkness.

⁶ There are two angels on the last circle of the Mountain, one the Angel of Purity, on the nearer side of the flame, the other (l. 55), on the farther side, the Warden of the earthly Paradise.

⁸ We need to supply the completion or the beatitude of *Matt.* v. 8, "*Quia Deum videbunt*," and that vision comes only through the cleansing fire.

So spake he, as more near approach we won ;
 Wherefore I then became, when him I heard,
 As one who in a sepulchre is thrown. 15
 Then I bent forward, with clasped hands upreared,
 On the fire gazing, picturing in my mind
 Men's bodies I had seen all burnt and seared ;
 And then towards me my good Guides inclined,
 And Virgil said, " My son, here pain may be, 20
 And torment, but death here thou shalt not find.
 Bethink thee, yea, bethink thee ; if in me
 Thou, e'en on Geryon, foundest trusty guide,
 What shall I do now God more near I see ?
 Be well assured that, should'st thou here abide 25
 Within this womb of flame a thousand year,
 No loss of e'en one hair should thee betide ;
 And if perchance to cheat thee I appear,
 Draw nigh and with thine hands the trial make
 Upon the garment's fringe that thou dost wear. 30
 Forsake all fear, yea, every fear forsake ;
 Turn thee to it, and enter free from care."
 I stood, nor did as guide my conscience take.
 And when he saw me fixed and hard stand there,
 A little vexed, he said, " Now look, my son, 35
 This wall parts thee from Beatrice fair."

14-18 Flesh and spirit quail before the fiery ordeal, even more than they had done in C. xx. 130, and the pilgrim is as one dead at the bare thought. He had seen heretics, traitors, coiners (possibly Capocchio, in 1293, *H.* xxix 136), perish at the stake, and shuddered at the sight. We remember that that was the punishment to which he himself had been condemned (*Frat. V. D.* p. 152). He is comforted with the thought that the fire burns but does not consume ; that it leads not to death, but life. Even human wisdom, as represented in Virgil, so often tried and never found wanting, would counsel such a risk for the great gain beyond. For Geryon see *H.* xvii. 91. We note the emphasised iteration of ll. 22, 31.

33 We enter on the first of a series of self-revelations. Of all the sins to which he had yielded, that from which he was now to be cleansed was the one he found it hardest to renounce. The conflict, the anguish, seemed too terrible to bear.

36 What conscience could not do was wrought by the name of Beatrice, as at once reviving the memories of the *Vita Nuova*, the first impressions of the boy of nine, and embodying in her transfiguration the image of celestial

As Pyramus the name of Thisbe won
 To ope his eyes in death and look on her,
 Then when the mulberry grew vermilion,
 So then, my hardness melted, did I stir 40
 Myself to my wise Leader at the name
 Which ever in my mind wells full and clear.
 And then he shook his head, and speech thus came :
 "What ! would we halt ?" while on his face there
 played
 A smile, as at a boy whom fruit doth tame. 45
 Then to the fire he foremost went and prayed
 That Statius, following me, would come the last,
 For he till then long space between us made.
 When I reached it, I could myself have cast
 In molten glass to cool mine agony, 50
 The fire was there so measureless and vast.
 Then my sweet Father, as to comfort me,
 Went on, of Beatrice speaking still,
 Saying, "E'en now I seem her eyes to see."
 For guide we had a voice whose song did trill 55
 From thence, and we, on it alone intent,
 Came forth where rose the steep side of the hill.

wisdom. The last sin, the sin that most easily beset him, must be conquered before he could gain that vision of beauty.

37 For Pyramus and Thisbe see *Met.* iv. 55-166. It is hard for us, with Bottom the Weaver in our minds, to understand how the story could affect a mind like Dante's. He, however, had no such associations. The legend ran that the fruit of the mulberry had before been white and changed to purple with the blood of the lovers.

45 The comparison was a favourite one (*C.* xxiv. 108; *Conv.* iv. 12). It would be worth while to collect all Dante's studies of child life. *Comp.* C. xxxi. 64.

57 The mortal Beatrice whom Dante remembered, the transfigured Beatrice whom he identifies with Heavenly Wisdom, are indissolubly blended; but it indicates a somewhat prosaic cast of mind to see, as many commentators do, in the eyes of Beatrice nothing but the "demonstrations of philosophy." Even the poet's allegorising analysis of his own verse (*Conv.* ii. 16), when the glow of inspiration had passed away, is scarcely a sufficient authority for such a limitation. The flames efface, it would seem, the last P from Dante's brow. The lust of the flesh is conquered and the purification is complete.

"Venite, benedicti Patris," sent
 That voice, from out a light so dazzling clear
 My power to gaze was all o'erpowered and spent. 60
 "The sun declines ;" it added, "eve is near ;
 Linger yet not, but hasten on your way,
 While yet in western skies no dark appear."
 The pathway through the rock straight upward lay,
 In such direction that I cast before 65
 The shadow from the sun's now sinking ray ;
 And a few stairs our footsteps travelled o'er,
 When by the shadow that had vanished quite
 I and my sages knew how daylight wore. 70
 And ere, through all its fulness infinite,
 The horizon gave but one unvaried hue,
 And all her gifts had been poured out by Night,
 Each on a stair as bed ourselves we threw ;
 For the hill's nature showed itself of might 75
 Our strength, not will, for climbing to subdue.
 As are the goats that on the mountain height,
 Ere they are fed, full wild, and wanton bound,
 Then, tame and still, to chew the cud delight,
 Hushed in the shade, while all is glare around, 80
 Watched by the shepherd, who upon his rod
 Leans, and, so leaning, keeps them safe and sound ;
 And as the goatherd, outside his abode,
 Doth by his slumbering flock his night-watch keep,
 Guarding lest beast of prey should make inroad, 85
 So were we three seen then in silence deep,
 I as the goat, and eke as goatherds they.
 On either side hemmed in by craggy steep,

⁵⁸ The beatitude of *Matt.* xxv. 34 (we have passed beyond those of *Matt.* v.) comes from the lips of an angel of greater glory than any that have yet appeared.

⁷³ The coming on of nightfall, the weariness and sleep of the pilgrim while his companions remain watching, answer, if I mistake not, to the soul's need of rest after the great crisis of conversion. It was against the law of the Mountain to ascend by night. The spiritual ascent called for the open eye and the clear light of Heaven.

⁸⁶ The thought implied is that Dante alone felt the burning power of the

Little we saw of what beyond us lay,
 But through that little I beheld each star,
 Larger than is their wont, with brighter ray. 90
 Thus chewing thought's cud, seeing them afar,
 Sleep fell on me, that sleep that knows full oft
 Tidings of things to come ere yet they are.
 Then in that hour, I deem, when shone aloft
 On the east hill-side Cytherea fair, 95
 Who ever burns with fire of passion soft ;
 A lady young and comely saw I there
 In that my dream, and gathering flowers she came
 Through a green field, and thus sang sweetest air.
 " Know thou, whoe'er dost seek to know my name, 100
 That I am Leah, and fair hands I ply
 To make myself a garland with the same ;
 I deck myself that in the mirror I
 May joy to gaze ; my sister Rachel, she
 All day unceasing doth her mirror eye. 105

fire. Virgil was beyond the reach of any purification. Statius had completed his purification in a lower circle (C. xxi. 67), and needed nothing further. They therefore needed no repose, and could watch over their brother-poet. It is noteworthy that Dante, with the words of *Matt.* xxv. 31-46 fresh in his memory, compares himself not to the sheep, but to the goat. We are reminded of the picture of the Good Shepherd in the Catacombs, in which He appears as bearing a goat upon His shoulder.

⁹⁰ The thought may have come from the description given by Marco Polo or other travellers of the stars as seen in the night of the tropics (see Humboldt, *Cosmos*, i. 100 n., ed. Bohn). That becomes a parable of the clearer vision of things heavenly found in the serener clime of a completed purity.

⁹¹ The phrase is repeated from l. 76. The figurative use, "chewing the cud of sweet and bitter fancy," does not occur in any of Dante's favourite poets, but he may have derived it from Cic. *Att.* ii. 12, 2, or August. *c. Faust.* vi., or any of the mediæval interpreters of *Lev.* xi. 3. Comp. C. xvi. 99.

⁹² Comp. C. ix. 16-64 ; *H.* xxvi. 7. The hour, as seen in l. 95, was near dawn, when Cytherea (= Venus = the morning star) was seen in the eastern horizon. The morning dream is, as in C. ix. 19-24, a prophecy rapidly to be fulfilled.

⁹⁷ Leah appears, not as she was at death, but in the beauty of her youth, in accordance with the thought of Aquinas that "*omnes resurgent in ætate juvenili*" (*Summ.* iii. 46. 9).

¹⁰¹ In the symbolism of mediæval writers, specially prominent in Gregory I. (*Magn. Mor.* vii. 28 ; *Hom.* 14. in *Ezek.*), Leah and Rachel were in the Old Testament, as Martha and Mary in the New Testament, symbols respectively of the life of action and that of contemplation. Standing parallel to them, but on a somewhat higher level, are Matilda and Beatrice. Leah gathers flowers for her own blameless delight (*a v. l.* gives *piacere*, as though

She those her beauteous eyes still longs to see,
 As I with busy fingers to adorn;
 Sight pleases her, and active working me."
 And now, through brightness that precedes the morn,
 Which shines more welcome on the pilgrims'
 head 110
 As they repose them near their journey's bourn,
 On every side around the darkness fled,
 And my sleep with it ; wherefore I arose,
 Seeing my great Masters risen from their bed.
 "That sweetest fruit, for which man's craving goes 115
 In search, on many a branch of many a tree,
 This day thy hunger with full peace shall close."
 Such words did Virgil, turning, speak to me,
 And never were there gifts of worthiest fame
 With which like these, the soul well-pleased could
 be. 120
 Such longing upon longing on me came
 To rise above, that each step of the way
 I felt my wings grow to bear up my frame.
 And when the whole ascent below us lay,
 And we stood where no step upmounteth higher, 125
 Virgil on me his eyes intent did stay,
 And said, "The temporal and the eternal fire
 Thou hast beheld, my son, and hast attained
 Where to see farther I may not aspire.

it were to please another but has less authority), finds, *i.e.*, her joy in the visible beauties of creation, and approximates to the contemplative life in the reflex consciousness of her joy (*Conv.* iv. 22, and Ruskin, *M.P.* iii. 224). Rachel leaves the works of the Creator, and gazes evermore at her Mirror, which is God, in which she beholds her own nature glorified and transfigured.

¹⁰⁶ The eyes of Rachel are her thoughts, her ideas, and these she contemplates in the mirror, as the ideas, in the platonic sense, of God. The words admit, however, of the rendering "*with* her beauteous eyes."

¹¹⁵ The "sweetest fruit" is none other than supreme good, the beatitude of the eternal life, which is now within the reach of the soul purified from the last trace of sensual evil. Men seek it on many trees, but it grows only in the Paradise of God (*Rev.* ii. 7; *C.* xvi. 90; *Conv.* iv. 12).

¹²⁷ Virgil's prediction (*C.* xii. 121) was at last fulfilled. Comp. the expansion of the same thought in *Par.* xviii. 53-63.

¹²⁸ We can scarcely fail to enter into Dante's thoughts as he parted men-

To bring thee here my skill and art I've strained ; ¹³⁰
 Now let thy pleasure take the true guide's place ;
 In steep paths, strait paths, thou'rt no more
 detained.

Behold the sun, which shines upon thy face ;
 See the green grass, the flowers, the tender trees,
 Which this fair land brings forth itself to grace. ¹³⁵

Until shall come, now bright with thoughts at ease,
 The eyes which, weeping, led me thee to seek,
 Thou mayst sit still or wander among these.

Look not for me to signal or to speak ;
 Free, upright, healthy is thine own will now, ¹⁴⁰
 And not to do as it commands were weak ;
 So, crowned and mitred, o'er thyself rule thou."

tally from the faithful companion of his ideal pilgrimage. Human wisdom had done its utmost in leading the pilgrim to the threshold of his home. The description of the scene finds its fulfilment in the earthly Paradise which Dante is about to enter. But it is also obviously symbolic in all its parts ; the sun is the Divine Presence, the Sun of Righteousness ; the flowers and trees are the creation as the work of God seen once more, as Eden was seen, to be "very good" (*Gen.* i. 31). "Pleasure," which leads astray in things earthly, is here a safe guide, and the pilgrim may walk among them at his will.

¹³⁵ The personal and symbolic elements are again blended. The eyes of Beatrice are those which had wept over Dante's fall ; they are also divine truths, in which, as of old, in the eyes of the living maiden, he will find a greater joy than in any visible beauty.

¹⁴² The most natural interpretation is that Dante now takes his place among those who are "kings and priests" unto God (*1 Pet.* ii. 9 ; *Rev.* i. 6, v. 10). Difficulties have been raised on the ground (1) that the mitre was used in the Roman ritual for the coronation of an emperor. Otho, *e.g.*, is described as both *coronatus et mitratus* (Mabill. *Mus. Ital.* ii. 401), and hence *Scart.* urges that both words refer to civil, and not ecclesiastical functions. On the other hand, this may be traversed by the fact that the word *corona* was used as equivalent to *mitra* (*D. C. A. s. v. Mitre*), so that both the words might refer to the Episcopate. On the whole, I adhere to what I have called the natural interpretation. I hazard the suggestion that the image may have been suggested by the coronation of Henry VII. in the Church of St. John Lateran on St. Peter's Day, 1312. It is, at least, probable that Dante was present at it, and everything indicates that the closing Cantos of the *Purgatory* were written about this period. See on the ritual of the Lateran coronation (p. 80).

*The Earthly Paradise—Matilda—The Two Rivers—Lethe
and Eunoe*

EAGER, within it and around, each way
 To search that heavenly forest dense and green,
 That tempered to mine eyes the new-born day,
 Waiting no more where I till then had been
 Upon the bank, I went on slowly, slow, 5
 O'er ground which fragrance breathed through all
 the scene;
 And a sweet breeze towards me then did blow
 With calm unvarying course upon my face,
 Not with more force than gentlest wind doth show.
 Thereat the leaves, set trembling all apace, 10
 Bent themselves, one and all, towards the side
 Where its first shade the Holy Hill doth trace;
 Yet from the upright swerved they not aside
 So far that any birds upon the spray
 Ceased by their wonted taskwork to abide, 15
 But, with full heart of joy, the breeze of day
 They welcomed now within their leafy bower,
 Which to their songs made music deep to play,
 Like that which through the pine-wood runs each hour,
 From branch to branch, upon Chiassi's shore, 20
 When Æolus lets loose Sirocco's power.

1-21 The three poets find themselves on the borders of the earthly Paradise. Of the locality of that Paradise as in the centre of a vast ocean, on the height of the Mountain of Cleansing, Dante's conception is absolutely unique. Mediæval geographers placed it commonly in the far East, as in the Hereford *Mappa Mundi* (p. xx.). Some, however, among them Brunetto Latini, fixed it in the north; Cosmas, beyond the ocean. Columbus, when he neared the mouth of the Orinoco, thought he was approaching it (Irving, *Columb.* x. 4; Baring Gould, *Curious Myths*, pp. 250-266).

The picture of the heavenly forest stands out in marked contrast with that of the dreary wood of *H. i. 2*. Here all is bright, fair, fragrant. Dante was at least not the slave of what Ruskin describes (*M. P.* iii. c. 14) as the Italian dislike of forest scenery.

¹⁶ I have, with *Scart.* and others, taken the word as *ore*, as derived from the Latin *aura*, not as from *hora*. The latter would, of course, give "the early hours of day."

²⁰ The picture is drawn from the wide-stretching pine-woods (now, for the most part, blasted) near Ravenna, which was Dante's home during the last

Already had my slow steps led me o'er
 Such space within the ancient wood, that I
 Where I had entered now discerned no more;
 And lo! to bar my progress, I descry 25
 A river on the left, whose rippling stream
 Bent down the grass that to its banks grew nigh.
 All waters here on earth men clearest deem
 Would seem to have some turbid taint untrue,
 Compared with that which nought to hide doth
 seem, 30
 E'en though it flows on, brown and brown in hue,
 Beneath the eternal shade where never sun
 Nor moon the darkness with their rays break through.
 My feet then halted, but mine eyes passed on
 Beyond that little stream, that I might gaze 35
 On the fresh varied mayblossoms one by one;
 And then I saw—as one sees with amaze
 A sight so sudden in bewilderment
 That every other thought the shock doth daze—
 A lady all alone, who, as she went, 40
 Sang evermore, and gathered flower on flower,
 With whose bright hues her path was all besprent.

two years of his life, and had probably been visited before he wrote the *Purgatory*. Classis (afterwards Chiassi) was the Latin name of a town, now vanished, which was in the 5th century the port of Ravenna. The soft musical whispering of the wind through the forest seems to have come to Dante's soul with a power to soothe which made it the fit type of the breeze of Paradise. The Sirocco was the wind which blew from the south-east. The classical student may compare the description with that of the Grove of Colonus (*Soph. Ed. Col.* 15-18, 668-690).

25 The river, as we see in l. 32, is Lethe, the river of forgetfulness, about which Dante had inquired in *H.* xiv. 131-136. The idea is in part borrowed from classical mythology, but Dante gives it a new significance in limiting its action to the memory of past sins. In assuming that to be the blessing given to the purified soul, Dante, standing alone, as Æschylus did (*Agam.* 732) in his assertion of what he proclaimed as a divine law, separates himself even from the teaching of Aquinas, who held that the memory of sins remains even after repentance, though their burden and their guilt are gone (*Summ.* iii., *Supp.* 77. 1). What, we ask, was the symbolic meaning of the trees that overshadowed Lethe? Did it point to the law that it is in profound retirement that the soul finds its way to the peace in which its past evil is remembered no more? Was he writing out of the fulness of a personal experience?

40 The poet's dream of Leah is fulfilled in the vision of the lady who now

"O lady sweet, whom rays of love have power
To warm, if I may trust to look and glance,
Which bear their witness of the heart's rich dower,"⁴⁵

appears on the scene. It is not till C. xxxiii. 119 that we are told, as it were incidentally, that her name is Matilda. The question why that name is given to her leads us to one of the hardest problems of the *Commedia*, on which many volumes have been written. I content myself here with a brief epitome.

(1) Matilda may be a purely ideal character, representing the active, as opposed to the contemplative life, answering to no historical personality. Those who adopt the theory that the Beatrice of the *Commedia* is also a purely imaginary person naturally take this view. They are, however, few in numbers and weak in arguments, the heretics of Dantean interpretation, and may safely be disregarded. "*Securus judicat orbis terrarum*." Their theory, too, even on their own showing, leaves the choice of the name Matilda unaccounted for.

(2) The *consensus* of almost all the earliest commentators, the primitive tradition of the Dante Church, identifies the Matilda of the *Purgatory* with the famous Countess who ruled over Lucca, Parma, Reggio, and Mantua, the friend and ally of Gregory VII. in his warfare with the Empire, the Lady of Canossa, who witnessed Henry IV.'s humiliation, who closed her life by bequeathing her territories to the See of Rome (Milm. *L. C.* iv. 90-264). Contemporary writers speak of her as of a "gracious beauty" and cultivated mind, liberal in her endowments of churches and abbeys. She seemed to the interpreters so far to represent fairly enough the active life of which the Matilda of the *Purgatory* is the symbol.

(3) On the other hand, the theory presents serious difficulties. Would Dante, the Ghibelline poet, have thus immortalised one who was identified with the degradation of the Empire, the usurpation of the Papacy? He does not mention Gregory VII.; why should he have given special honour to his ally? Would not her gift of territorial domains to the Papacy have seemed to him to stand on the same footing as that of Constantine? (*H.* xix. 115.) Is there not a certain want of congruity in coupling together two personages so different in their position as the great Countess and one unknown to history, like the daughter of Folco Portinari, the wife of Simon de' Bardi?

(4) That doubt having suggested itself, men began to look out for other Matildas, more or less conspicuous, and their claims have been urged by advocates who were confident that they had found the true solution of the problem. (a) The Empress Matilda, wife of Henry the Fowler. She was conspicuous alike for her beauty and her goodness, ministered to the sick and poor, prepared their baths, dressed their wounds (Sermoneta and Gaetani). She died at the age of eighty in 968. (b) St. Matilda of Hackenborn, a Benedictine nun of the convent of Helpede near Eisleben (*d.* 1310). She wrote a work, *De Spirituali Justitia*, which contains thoughts sufficiently Dante-like—descriptions of Paradise, the vision of God, and the like—to justify the inference that the poet may have read it (Lubin, Boehmer). (c) Matilda a Beguine of Magdeburg (*d.* 1299), who wrote a treatise on the effluent Light of the Godhead, also more or less Dante-like in thought, with its visions of the pains of Hell and Purgatory, of the Virgin and the Saints (Preger). Special monographs over and above the notes in commentaries are found in the volumes of the *D. Gesell*, by Barlow (ii. 331), Boehmer (iii. 101), Paquelin (iv. 105), Scartazzini (iv. 411).

I cannot bring myself to accept any of these hypotheses. It is questionable whether the fame or the works of the saintly ladies of Germany could have reached Dante at Verona, or Lucca, or Ravenna. Against (b) there is the

O may it please thee," said I, "to advance
 To this fair border where I've ta'en my post,
 That I to hear thy song have better chance.
 Thou bringest to my thoughts the pleasant coast
 Where strayed Proserpine when by fatal chance, 80
 Lost by her mother, she her spring flowers lost."

special fact that it was not after Dante's manner to introduce into his *Commedia* persons who were living at the assumed date of his vision. It tells against all three that they do not correspond, in their age or their ascetic life, with the Matilda of the *Purgatory*; that they do not stand on the same plane with Beatrice so as to be naturally associated with her. The resemblances of thought, on which stress is laid in the case of (b) and (c), are not more than might be found in any writers equally familiar with the mystical teachers of the age, such, e.g., as Bonaventura, Richard, or Hugh, de St. Victor.

Scartazzini seems to me to have been on the right track, the absence of the name notwithstanding, in looking for Matilda within the circle of the friends of Beatrice mentioned in the *V. N.* There is a fitness in her being associated in the eternal life with one who had been her friend on earth, which is lacking in all the other hypotheses. Here the two are emphatically on the same level, both in their mortal and immortal life. I cannot follow him, however, in the choice he has made from among the fair ones of the Beatrice circle. He identifies Matilda with the lady of whom Dante tells us in the *V. N.* (c. 5) that he made a "screen," addressing to her his sonnets and *canzoni* in order that he might conceal his consuming passion for the true object of his worship. I own that I cannot find in the poems addressed to that lady anything that is specifically appropriate enough to identify her with the Matilda of the *Purgatory*, and there is no evidence that she was dead in 1300, and I venture to suggest a different solution. If I may not dare to say *Eureka* where so many have uttered the same cry before me, I submit that the new hypothesis is a key that fits the lock, a theory that includes all the phenomena.

(5) Early in the story of the *V. N.* Dante records the death of one who was very dear to his beloved one. He writes a sonnet (*S.* 2) and a ballata (*B.* 2) in her memory. He is certain that the Lord of Angels has taken her to His glory. He describes her as of "very gentle aspect;" her "soul was gentle," her semblance "blithe and cheerful" (*gaia . . . leggiadria*). She was conspicuous for the love and courtesy which she showed to all. He had seen love incarnate in Beatrice weeping over her corpse. He had shed tears himself. As on the death of Beatrice he used the words of *Lam.* i. 1, "How does the city sit solitary that was full of people!" so on that of her friend he wrote from *Lam.* i. 12, "Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow!" Here, it seems to me, is the very photograph of the Matilda we are in search of as she meets us in the *Purgatory*. What more natural than that Dante should transfigure the one friend as he had transfigured and glorified the other; that they should be to his idealising mind as the Martha and Mary, the Leah and Rachel, of the Biblical typology; that if in Beatrice, made more sad and meditative by her friend's death, he saw the symbol of the wisdom which contemplates the Divine ideas, he should see in Matilda (I supply the missing link of name) the symbol of the more practical wisdom which delights in occupying itself with the works of the Creator? The two friends, "lovely and pleasant in their lives," were divided but a little while by death, and were found together in the Paradise of God, each with her special grace and characteristic charm.

⁸⁰ The whole description is taken from *Met.* v. 385-401, which

Then, as fair lady, moving in the dance,
 Turns with her soles just lifted from the ground,
 And scarcely one foot forward doth advance,
 She among red and golden flowers turned round 55
 To me, and with no other look she went
 Than downcast eyes of maid with meekness crowned.
 And now she gave my prayers their full content,
 So drawing near me, that her song's sweet tone
 Came to me, and I gathered what it meant. 60
 Soon as she came where o'er the bank had grown
 Plants with the waves of that fair river wet,
 By special boon her eyes on me were thrown.
 I do not deem such glorious light was set
 Beneath the lids of Venus, when her son 55
 Transfixed her as he never had done yet.
 Erect, she smiled the other bank upon,
 Those fair flowers culling with her hands' sweet art,
 Which without seed that region high hath won.
 By just three paces did the stream us part, 70
 But Hellespont, where Xerxes crossed its wave,
 Still even now a curb for man's proud heart,
 Ne'er from Leander suffered hate more grave,
 'Twixt Sestos and Abydos flowing strong,
 Than that from me, because no ford it gave. 75

determines the sense of the *primavera*, which I have rendered "spring flowers."

Collecti flores tunicis cecidere remissis."

The word seems to have been used especially for the *marguerite* daisy, but in *Par.* xxx. 63 it seems used, as here, for flowers generally. Comp. *S.* xvi.

55 The colours are probably symbolic, "red" of love, and "golden" of purity.

65 The eyes of Matilda are hardly less bright than those of Beatrice. For the story of Venus wounded by Cupid see *Met.* x. 525 *et seq.*

69 As in *C.* xxvii. 135. Comp. *Met.* i. 107, 108,

*"Ver erat æternum, placidique tepentibus auris
 Mulcebant Zephyri natos sine semine flores."*

70 The three steps may indicate the ordeals of shame (*C.* xxx. 76-78), confession (*C.* xxxi. 34-36), conversion (*C.* xxxi. 85-87), which have yet to be passed before Lethe can be crossed.

71-74 Comp. *Herod.* vii. 54-56 for Xerxes' passage of the Hellespont, and Ovid (*Ep.* xix., *Heroid.* xvii.) for the story of Leander.

"Ye are new come," so she began ere long,
 "And maybe, seeing I in this place smile,
 Chosen as home to which man's race may throng,
 This wondering springs from some distrust awhile ;
 But the psalm '*Delectasti*' pours its ray 80
 To free thy mind from clouds that thee beguile.
 And thou, who art in front, and me didst pray,
 Speak if thou more wouldst hear, for I came nigh
 Ready for every question, doubt to stay."
 "This stream," I said, "and forest's melody, 85
 Clash in my mind with that my new-born faith
 In what I heard, of this the contrary."
 Then, "I will tell thee how is wrought," she saith,
 "By its fit cause what doth thy wonder move,
 And clear the cloud that thee embarrasseth. 90
 The Good Supreme, self-centred in its love,
 Made man as good, and gave this place of bliss
 As earnest of eternal peace above ;
 By his own fault here short abode was his ;
 By his own fault, for weeping and dismay 95
 He honest laughter, pleasant mirth doth miss.
 And that the stir wherein the vapours play,
 That rise exhaling from the land and sea,
 And follow upon heat far as they may,

77 The words refer not to Heaven, but the Earthly Paradise, as chosen for the first home of man.

80 The reference to *Ps.* xcii. 4, singularly significant as pointing to Matilda as the symbol of the temper that delights in the creation (*factura*) of God and exults in the works of His hands, in whose thoughts those works are counted of high esteem (*magnificasti*), as contrasted with that of the unwise who do not know or understand them. Comp. Ruskin, *M.P.* iii. 14. The psalm occurs in the Saturday Service for Lauds. Verses 12, 13 have specially to be noted.

86 The doubt expressed rises out of the words of Statius in *C.* xxi. 43-54, that in the Mountain of Cleansing there was neither rain nor dew nor snow nor river.

91 The answer is found in the history of Paradise. It was to be the earnest of something better than itself, even of the "eternal peace." It was placed high above all atmospheric disturbances that rise from the lower earth. The uniform current that Dante now felt came (from the standpoint of the Ptolemaic system) from the revolution of the air, caused by that of the *Primum Mobile*, which communicated its motion to all the other spheres.

May not on man discharge their enmity, 100
This mountain rises up so high to heaven,
And from the point where it is barred is free.
Now since the air in steady course is driven,
With the prime movement circling everywhere, 105
Unless the circle is at some point riven,
Upon this summit, rising in pure air,
All free of contact, doth this motion smite,
And through the forest dense wakes murmurs rare.
And smitten thus, the plants have wondrous might
With virtue rare the breeze to impregnate, 110
And this, revolving, scatters it aright ;
And yonder earth, according to its state,
Worthy in soil or climate, divers trees
Of diverse virtue then doth generate.
Thou should'st not deem thine eye a wonder sees, 115
This being heard, when any plant may grow,
And, without seed appearing, gain increase ;
And of this holy country thou shouldst know
It is, where thou art, full of every seed,
And fruit has in it gathered not below. 120
The stream thou see'st doth not from source proceed
Renewed from vapour by the cold congealed,
Like river that or gains or loses speed,
But flows from fount that sure supply doth yield,
Which just so much regains by will of God 125
As it sends forth, in twofold ways unsealed.
On this side it descends, with power endowed,
Which takes from men the memory of their sin,
On that, recalls to men each deed of good.

¹⁰⁹ The explanation is somewhat complicated, but the thought of the framework of the parable seems to be that the air impregnated with the seeds of seminal principles that are borne by the plants which grow in Paradise, comes thence to the inhabited earth, and that where they find the good ground they take root and bring forth fruit worthy of their origin. Below the surface there is the corresponding thought that all truth and goodness in man's present state is but the survival of his primal state, the remnants of a lost blessedness. "Aristotle," as South (i. 32) puts it, was "but the rubbish of an Adam."

So here it doth the name of Lethe win, 130
 And Eunoe there, and till men both shall taste,
 Will not to do its wondrous work begin.
 All other savours are by this surpassed;
 And though thy thirst e'en now be satisfied,
 So that I need not more to show thee haste, 135
 Yet give I free corollary beside;
 Nor that my speech will prove less dear, I deem,
 If beyond promise with thee it abide.
 Those who of old indulged in poet's theme 140
 Of golden age and its high happiness,
 Of this land had perchance Parnassian dream.
 Here innocence man's primal root did bless,
 Here ever Spring and every fruit abound;
 The nectar this which they to know profess."
 And then I turned me, face and body, round 145
 Upon my Bards, and saw that with a smile
 They of those last words well had heard the sound;
 Then to that lady fair I turned awhile.

130 The nature of the river in its twofold currents, as Lethe and Eunoe, is next explained. Man must forget all past evil and remember only past good in order to return to the bliss of Eden.

139 The words point to the description of the golden age in *Met.* i. 89 *et seq.*, in which Dante finds a reminiscence or a dream of the Paradise of *Gen.* ii. The smile of the poets (there is an infinite pathos in the smile of Virgil) was one of recognition. They had found the reality of which before they had only dreamt.

*The Apocalypse of Glory—The Seven Candlesticks—The Four-
and-Twenty Elders—The Gryphon and the Chariot*

SINGING like lady fair whom love doth sway,
 She carried on the close of her discourse—
 “*Quorum peccata tecta*, blest are they.”
 And e’en as nymphs who take their lonely course
 Through forest glades, desiring, this to shun, 5
 And that to see, the full sun in his force,
 So then against the stream her steps went on
 Along the bank, and I, with equal pace,
 Following her dainty footsteps one by one.
 ‘Twixt us were not a hundred footsteps’ space, 10
 When both the banks with equal turn bent round,
 So that towards the east I turned my face.
 Nor had we thus passed o’er much length of ground,
 When that fair lady wholly turned to me,
 And said, “My brother, look, and hear that sound.” 15

¹ The opening lines, as indeed the description of Matilda in C. xxviii. 40-42, are almost an echo of a sonnet of Guido Cavalcanti, beginning

“*In un boschetto trovai pastorella.*”

There also the shepherdess walked alone in the wood, and—

“*Cantava come fosse innamorata.*”

Assuming that the parallelism was not unconscious, there is something specially touching, it seems to me, in Dante’s thus reproducing the thoughts of his early friend and transfiguring them with a new glory.

³ *Ps.* xxxii. (one of the Psalms for Matins on Tuesday in the Roman Breviary, as also one of the Seven Penitential Psalms) rightly follows on *Ps.* xcii., as indicating the necessary condition of the joy of which the latter is the utterance. The soul that is laden with the burden of its sins cannot rightly delight in the handiwork of the Creator. So in *Ps.* xxxii. itself the beatitude of the penitent ends in the joy and gladness of the pardoned.

⁴ As in C. xxviii. 40, the poet seems to strive at reproducing all that he had ever seen in the old days at Florence, when, it may be, he had known the real Matilda, of womanly grace and dignity. Is it too much to conjecture that the picture is a reminiscence, floating before the mind’s eye, of a gathering of some of the sixty fair ones of the *V. N.* (c. 6) in Vallombrosa? Did he remember how he and she had walked on either side the stream of the Acqua Bella, which flows through it, as they were doing now in the cloudland of his vision on either side of Lethe?

¹⁵ The term “brother” is applied to Dante too often in the *Purgatory* by other spirits (C. iv. 127, xi. 82, xiii. 94, *et al.*) to allow us to lay much stress on it; but it surely falls in better with the theory of old acquaintance than with the hypothesis that the speaker is a countess, an empress, or an abbess.

And lo ! a brightness shot all suddenly
 On every side throughout the forest vast,
 Such that I thought it lightning well might be ;
 But because lightning comes and then is past,
 And this, continuing, brightened more and more, ²⁰
 "What then is this ?" said I in thought at last.
 And through the luminous air the breezes bore
 Melodious sweetness, and a righteous zeal
 Made me the hardihood of Eve deplore,
 Who, while the heavens and earth obedient wheel, ²⁵
 A woman, by herself, but newly made,
 Could not endure a veil should aught conceal ;
 Beneath which veil had she devoutly stayed,
 Full well might I those joys ineffable
 Long since, and through long ages, mine have made. ³⁰
 And, as my steps among such first-fruits fell
 Of joys eternal, all my soul amazed,
 And eager still the sum of joys to swell,

¹⁶ We enter on a new region of the seer's vision, obviously the outcome of his studies of those of Ezekiel and St. John, as other parts of the poem had been of his studies of Virgil, Ovid, Lucan, Statius. In the "grand old form" of Crete (*H.* xiv. 103) we find, as it were, a prelude to later apocalyptic studies. And, as before, studies lead to imitation—I had almost said to rivalry. He matches his own strength with that of the seers of Chebar and Patmos, as he had done with that of the poets of the Roman empire. But the work is not that of a mere imitator. It is truer to say that the studies of the poet bring before him new images and new thoughts, and that these, in the hour of vision, which in his case was often literally ecstatic, combined themselves, almost without the exercise of will, in his imagination. Much of what follows was seen by him, if I mistake not, as we see things in a dream, though it afterwards passed through the crucible of the theologian and was fashioned by the graving-tool of the supreme artist.

The vision begins, like that of *Ezek.* i. 4-14, with a brightness as of lightning, but not, like lightning, evanescent. The whole forest is illuminated.

²² The melody is the distant sound of the hymn of l. 85.

²⁴⁻³¹ In dwelling on the sin of Eve rather than on that of Adam (but see C. xxxii. 37), Dante follows Aquinas (*Summ.* ii. 2, 163. 4), as he follows St. Paul (1 *Tim.* ii. 14). All heaven and earth were setting an example of obedience. She alone disobeyed, sinning, as Lucifer was said to have sinned, on the first day of her creation, in her impatience of the veil which came between her and a knowledge which was not good (*Gen.* iii. 5, 6). Had she accepted that veil she would have entered into all the joys of Eden for a long life, and these would have been for her descendants but the *primitia*, the first fruits, of life eternal. Below the outward framework there lies the thought that man, accepting the limitations of his knowledge, may attain to a vision of divine things, of which the attempt to transgress those limitations

Before us, like a fire that brightly blazed,
 The whole air glowed beneath the branches green,³⁵
 And the sweet sound to song distinct was raised.
 O holy virgins, if or hunger keen
 Or cold night-watch for you were borne by me,
 Strong cause have I my wage to claim, I ween.
 Now is it meet that Helicon more free⁴⁰
 For me should flow, Urania lend her song,
 Things hard for thought, to clothe in poesy.
 A little farther on, through distance long
 That lay between our feet and where they were,
 Seven trees of gold mocked us with semblance⁴⁵
 wrong ;
 But when I came so near that what they share
 In common, and so cheat the erring sense,
 Lost not through distance any mark it bare,
 The power which feeds the mind's intelligence,
 Perceived that they seven candelabra were,⁵⁰
 And that the strain "*Hosanna !*" floated thence.

by disobedience, eating the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil, will only deprive him.

³⁷ Invocations of the Muses were an inheritance from classical poetry (C. i. 8; *H.* ii. 7). Here stress is laid on Urania, the Muse of heavenly poetry, as giving the required help. Comp. Milton's "Descend from Heaven, Urania . . ." (*P. L.* vii. 1).

³⁸ The words speak of the night-watches of the student, the vigils and the fasts which had endangered health and enfeebled sight (*Conv.* iii. 1, 9; *V. N.* c. 23). So Milton had "outwatched the Bear," and lost his sight in the service of his country and the Muse.

⁴³⁻⁵⁰ *Albero* may be either a tree or the mast of a ship. I prefer the former. *Mark* viii. 24 may have been in Dante's mind. As the vision approaches the seeming trees are seen to be seven candlesticks, the *candelabra* of the vision of *Rev.* i. 12. There they stand for the seven Churches of Asia: here, in their combination with the four and twenty elders and the four living creatures of *Rev.* iv. 4 and 6, they are probably symbols, like the "seven lamps of fire burning before the throne," of the seven spirits of God, *i.e.*, of the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit (*Isai.* xi. 2), all the three symbolismisms coming from the seven-branched candlestick—itsself probably a symbol of the tree of life—of *Exod.* xxv. 37. This seems a more natural interpretation than that of Peter Dante, that the candelabra represent the seven orders of the Church's ministry, or the seven sections of the second paragraph of the Apostles' Creed. The son (if the *Commentary* be indeed his) does not seem either in this instance, or in others, to be a true interpreter of his father's mind.

⁵¹ The voice which cries *Hosanna* ("Save!" but passing into the more

Above them flamed their goodly order fair,
 More clear than is the moon in sky serene,
 In her mid month and in the midnight air.
 Then, full of wonder great at what was seen, 55
 I to good Virgil turned, and he replied,
 With face as much amazed as mine had been.
 Then back I looked, and those high wonders eyed,
 Which moved towards us so exceeding slow,
 That they outstripped had been by new-made bride.⁶⁰
 The lady chid me : "Why this eager glow
 Only for those clear lamps of living light,
 And look'st thou not at what behind doth go ?"
 And then I saw a troop arrayed in white
 Come after these, as guides that led them on, 65
 And never whiteness here was seen so bright.
 On my left flank the stream in glory shone,
 And my left side it mirrored back again,
 If I looked on it, as a glass had done.
 When on my bank I did such post attain 70
 That now the river only did us part,
 For better view I did my steps refrain,

general sense of "Hail !" *Ps.* cxviii. 25, 26 ; *Matt.* xxi. 9, *et al.*) comes from the four and twenty elders.

⁵² I have chosen "order" as the best equivalent for *arnese*, from German *harnisch*, and so passing through the senses of "harness," "armour," and "equipment" generally.

⁵⁵ The wonderful vision is as mysterious to Virgil as it was to Dante. His wisdom has reached the end of its tether.

⁵⁹ The slowness of the procession may be only an accident of the description, part of its dignity and majesty, as it would be in like processions upon earth, *e.g.*, that of the *carroccio* or battle-car of Italian cities. It may also symbolise the slowness of the growth and evolution of spiritual gifts in their manifestation to the world.

⁶¹ Matilda directs the seer's attention to a yet greater wonder. The impersonal graces of the Spirit are less marvellous than their revealed human embodiments, the company of white-robed ones (*Rev.* iv. 4) who follow the seven candlesticks.

⁶⁷ At the risk of falling into the subtlety which is the besetting sin of commentators, I venture to think that we may read between the lines the thought that Lethe, the symbol of the ultimate forgetfulness of evil, the conscience purified from sin, becomes, when illumined by the Divine light of revealed truth, a mirror in which a man beholds himself, his weakness and infirmities (Dante sees his *left* side), as he had never seen them before.

And I beheld the flamelets forward start,
 And o'er the air behind their colours shed ;
 Like pennons seemed they, floating each apart, 75
 So that the air was still marked overhead
 With seven broad bands, the same as those in hue
 Whence the sun's bow and Delia's zone are made.
 The streamers rearward stretched beyond my view,
 And far as I could distance estimate, 80
 Ten paces came between the farthest two.
 Under a heaven thus fair as I narrate
 Did four and twenty elders slowly move,
 In pairs, with fleur-de-lys incoronate,

⁷⁵ The MSS. give for the most part *pennelli*. Some editors adopt *panelli*. The latter word would give the meaning of a torch, a flambeau ; the former has the two meanings of (1) a painter's brush or pencil, indicating the pencilled track of the flame of the candlesticks ; or (2) a pennon or streamer, such as floats on the mast of a ship. Of these, l. 79 seems in favour of (2).

⁷⁷ We note the artist-poet in the symbolism. Each gift of the Spirit has its appropriate colour, seen in its effluence and effects. Together yet distinct, they form the rainbow or the lunar halo (Delia = Diana), such as St. John saw round about the Throne (*Rev.* iv. 3), and those spiritual gifts stretch beyond the seer's ken. He cannot measure the extent of their manifestations.

⁸¹ The ten steps can hardly stand, as some have taken them, for the ten commandments, but *Conv.* ii. 15 shows that the number was for Dante full of a mystical significance.

⁸³ The twenty-four elders of *Rev.* iv. 4 are probably the twelve Patriarchs and the twelve Apostles, as representing the Churches of the Old and New Covenants. The *consensus* of commentators, however, is, I believe, right in taking Dante's elders for the twenty-four books of the Old Testament, as reckoned by the Jews, and by Jerome in his Preface (*Prolog. Gal.*) to the Vulgate, who indeed expressly identifies those books with the elders of *Rev.* iv. 4. That Preface had become the basis of a traditional belief, and Dante had probably read it in every MS. of the Vulgate with which he came in contact. This is, indeed, the exegesis of St. John's symbolism adopted by not a few writers whom Dante was likely to have studied—Victorinus, Beda, and perhaps also the Abbot Joachim (*Par.* xii. 140).

⁸⁴ The *fiordaliso* of the Italian is identified in C. xx. 86 with the *fleur-de-lys*, the *fleur-de-Louis*, the *flower-de-luce* of the kings of France, traditionally derived from St. Clotilda, the daughter of Clovis, but first emblazoned on the banner of France by Louis VII. in 1137 (C. xx. 86). That flower is, without doubt, the iris, and that does not furnish any special symbolism. Probably Dante, like a crowd of later writers, took the *fleur-de-lys* for a lily, the white Annunciation lily of the Madonna, such as painters place in the hands of Gabriel (see Folkard's *Plant Lore*, pp. 341, 387). So taken, the lily-crowns, emblems of virgin purity, fit in well with the song of the elders.

And they all sang, "Oh, blessed thou above 85
 All Adam's daughters, blessed too for aye
 Be all thy glorious beauties that we love!"
 And, when the flowers and other verdure gay,
 That on the other bank grew opposite, 90
 Of those elect ones no more felt the sway,
 As in the heaven there follows light on light,
 Four living creatures after them drew nigh,
 Each wearing crown of leafage green and bright.
 Plumed with six wings were all that company;
 Of eyes their plumes were full, and Argus' eyes, 95
 Were they yet living, might with those eyes vie.
 To tell their forms no rhymes my store supplies,
 O Reader, for new wants bring new constraint,
 So that in this I must economise.
 But in Ezekiel read how he doth paint 100
 What he saw coming from the region cold,
 With wind, and cloud, and fire together blent,
 And, as thou'lt find them in his pages old,
 So were they there, except that as to wings,
 St. John with me, and not with him doth hold. 105

85 From our own religious standpoint we wonder at the testimony of the elders being given not to the Christ, but to the Virgin Mother. We must remember, however, (1) that the word "Hosanna" has already met us as expressive of the adoration of Christ, and (2) that what startles us would seem natural enough to the student of St. Bernard and St. Bonaventura. The idea that the words are spoken of the transfigured, ideal Beatrice, though adopted by many critics (*Phil.* among them), does not seem to me to commend itself. (a) The words are distinctly a paraphrase of *Luke* i. 42. (b) The absence of the Virgin from the mystic vision would be startlingly at variance with Dante's profound devotion to her, as in *H.* ii. 94; *Par.* xxxi. 116, xxxii. 85-114, xxxiii. 1-39. (c) Beatrice is adequately glorified hereafter.

92 The four living creatures are identified (*l.* 100) with those of the vision of *Ezek.* i. 4-14, *Rev.* iv. 6-8, with the faces respectively of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle. In the traditional interpretation of the Middle Ages these were symbols of the four Evangelists (Greg. M. *Hom.* iv. in *Ezech.* f. 258, ed. Paris, 1521), and the hymn of Adam of St. Victor (Trench, *Sacr. Lat. Poetry*, p. 57; *Opp. Rich. de S. Vict. Seq.* xxx. p. 1515, ed. Migne). Art had brought that interpretation into prominence in every part of Christendom, and it can scarcely be doubted that Dante adopts that symbolism. The green wreaths with which they are crowned are symbols at once of hope and victory. As in *Rev.* iv. 8 (*l.* 104), Dante gives them six wings, and the wings are full of eyes, that seem in their threefold

The space within the four a car enrrings,
That on two wheels in triumph moveth on,
Which harnessed to his neck a Gryphon brings.

duality to represent the vision of past, present, future—the *Rœspice, Aspice, Prospice* of St. Bernard.

107 The chariot does not appear by name in the vision of Ezekiel, but has a basis in the wheels of that vision, and in the use of the chariot in *Ps. civ. 3, Isai. xix. 1*, as one with the throne of God who dwells between the Cherubim. In Dante's vision it stands without doubt for the visible Church of God, which he, from his standpoint and for his own age, identified with that of Latin Christendom. The two wheels of the chariot have been interpreted as the active and the contemplative life, as the Old and New Testament, as the Jewish and the Christian Church, as justice and mercy, as the priesthood and the laity. Dante, however, may be allowed to be his own interpreter, and he, in *Par. xii. 106*, identifies the two wheels with St. Dominic and St. Francis, as types respectively of the knowledge and the love by which alone the Church advances on its triumphant course, and which find, from age to age, different representatives. The *carroccio* of Italian cities, the chariot which was the symbol of the state, lent itself naturally to such a symbolism.

108 I adopt without hesitation the general view of interpreters that the Gryphon stands for Christ in His divine and human natures, but the question how Dante was led to that symbol, with what associations it was connected in his own mind and that of his readers, has yet to be answered, and its genesis is so eminently characteristic of the confluence of the classical and mediæval, the Pagan and the Christian, elements in Dante's mind, that it will be worth while to attempt to solve the problem. Herodotus (iii. 16) seems to have been the first to bring to the Greeks the tale of the one-eyed Arimaspians among the people of the far North, and of the *gryphons* who were the guardians of the sacred gold there. The tale passed on from age to age, and reappeared, though classed as fabulous, in Virgil (*Ecl. viii. 27*) and in Pliny (*N. H. vii. 2, x. 49*). The gryphons are described more definitely as combining the body of a lion with the head and wings of an eagle, as here in l. 108. They were connected with the worship of Apollo, and the *chariot of the sun-god was represented as drawn by a gryphon* (Claud. *In vi. Cons. Hon. v. 30*), which was held to represent the earthly element in Apollo's nature. So far the thought was ready to Dante's hand. The belief in the gryphons as lion-eagles grew stronger in the dark ages. They appear in Isidore of Seville's *Origines* (xv. 3, 32), in the Hereford *Mappa Mundi* (p. 61), in heraldic blazons, in names like Griffin, Greifenheim, Greifenhahn, and the like (Pott. *Fam. Nam. p. 275*), in travels like those of Maundeville (c. 26) and Marco Polo (*Yule, ii. 349, 354*). So far we have a reason for Dante's choice. He wanted a mystic animal for his mystic chariot, and he found one in the gryphon. But for him it had a new significance. *Dan. vii. 4* had presented the lion-eagle form as the symbol of a mighty kingdom. Both the lion and the eagle were found separately in the four living creatures of Ezekiel and St. John, and in the received symbolism of the Church, as in the hymn of Adam of St. Victor already quoted, the eagle was assigned to St. John because he set forth the glory of the Eternal Son, the lion to St. Mark as representing the risen Christ. Isidore (*Orig. iv. 7, c. 2*) had anticipated Dante in seeing in the lion the symbol of the humanity of Christ, in the eagle that of His divinity; and so the confluence of traditions from widely different sources was complete (Bähr, *Symb. i. 350*).

And his two wings, on this and that side one,
 Are stretched midway, three bands on either side, ¹¹⁰
 So that by cleaving he wrought harm to none.
 In vain the eye their height to follow tried;
 So far as he was bird, all gold his frame,
 And white the rest, with vermeil modified.
 Not merely never car so glorious came ¹¹⁵
 In Rome for Scipio's or Augustus' joy,
 But e'en the sun's to it were poor in fame—
 The sun's, which swerving, fire must needs destroy,
 When earth in prayer made her devout appeal,
 And Jove his secret justice did employ. ¹²⁰
 Three maidens on the right, around the wheel,
 Came dancing, one of them so fiery red,
 Background of flame would scarce her form reveal;
 The second, as if she were fashionèd,
 Both flesh and bones, of emerald bright and green; ¹²⁵
 The third, like snow but newly scatterèd.
 Now by the white one they led on were seen,
 Now by the red, and at the latter's song
 They moved, or quick, or with sedater mien.

109-111 The thought seems to be that the wings of the eagle, *i.e.*, the working of the Divine nature of the risen Lord, co-operated harmoniously with the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit in ways beyond human ken, as the wings themselves stretched beyond the seer's gaze.

113 Gold, as in the Holy of holies, was the symbol of Divine holiness (Bähr, *Symb.* i. 282). The other colours come from the "white and ruddy" of *Song of Sol.* v. 10, and are mystically interpreted as those of human purity and love.

115 The classical allusions are (1) to the triumph of Scipio Africanus after the battle of Zama; (2) to that of Augustus (*Æn.* viii. 714); (3) to the chariot of the sun as described in *Met.* ii. 107-110. The lines that follow refer to the Phaethon mythus, when the Earth-goddess prayed Jupiter to protect her from the perils brought about by the daring of the young charioteer (*Met.* ii. 278-300). There may be an allusion, to be read between the lines, to any, whether a Boniface or a Philip, who should usurp the place of the supreme ruler of both Church and Empire.

121 The three maidens are the three theological virtues, Faith in the whiteness of purity, Hope in the emerald of the ever-budding freshness, Love in the burning glow of charity (Bähr, *Symb.* i. 316-340). The lines that follow indicate the spiritual truth that now faith is the source of hope and love, now again love of faith and hope, the intensity of love determining the activities of the other two.

Upon the left four made a festal throng, 130
 All clothed in purple, following as their guide
 One of themselves to whom three eyes belong.
 And on this group close following I descried
 Two aged men in different garb arrayed,
 But like in mien, each grave and dignified. 135
 And one the habits of the tribe displayed
 Who own as master great Hippocrates,
 Whom Nature for her dearest creatures made;
 The second showed far other thoughts than these,
 With sword that was so sharp and lucent seen, 140
 That e'en across the stream fear marred my ease.
 Then four I looked on, all of humble mien,
 And behind all an aged man did tread
 Alone, asleep, yet with a face full keen.
 And all these seven were so apparellèd 145
 As that first group, yet not with lilies they
 Around their heads for wreaths were garlanded,

130 The four maidens on the left of the chariot are the four cardinal virtues (natural, as distinguished from the three just described), not of the Aristotelian but of Platonic ethics, Justice, Courage, Temperance, and Prudence (*Purg.* i. 23). They are clothed in purple, the rich crimson of regal robes (*Matt.* xxvii. 28; *Mark* xv. 17), as the emblem of their sovran excellence (Bähr, *ut sup.*). The three eyes are once more as the *Respice, Aspice, Prospice* of St. Bernard. Comp. *Conv.* iv. 27, where we read that prudence implies memory of the past, knowledge of the present, and foresight of the future.

134-141 The two elders are St. Luke and St. Paul. The former is chosen as being the patron-saint of the art in which Dante had enrolled himself, perhaps too as being, in Church tradition, the patron also of painters, among whom Dante claimed a place (*V. N.* c. 35). The sword was the received emblem of St. Paul, partly as recalling the manner of his martyrdom, partly as the emblem of the "sword of the Spirit" (*Eph.* vi. 17; *Heb.* iv. 12). Carrying on the idea of the canon of Scripture, the two forms may represent the Acts and the Pauline Epistles. For Hippocrates, comp. *H.* iv. 143.

142 The four elders that follow are less easy to identify. (1) Some have found in them the writers of the Catholic epistles; (2) others again the four greater prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel; (3) others, again, the four doctors of the Latin Church, Gregory the Great, Jerome, Ambrose, and Augustine, or (4) the four early popes, Sixtus, Pius, Callistus, and Urban, named in *Par.* xxvii. 43, 44. I incline, on the whole, to (1) as the most probable, the red roses and other flowers being the symbols of their burning charity.

143 The aged man who walks sleeping and alone is identified by one commentator (*Ott.*) with Moses; by most others with St. John in his character as the seer of the Apocalypse, closing the whole mystical procession, the closed eyes indicating the sleep of ecstasy.

But roses and all flowers with vermeil gay;
 At some small distance sight might well have sworn
 That flames above the brows of each did play. 150
 And as the car in front of me was borne,
 Thunder was heard, and then that worthy band
 Seemed as if onward step must be forborne,
 And with the former ensigns took their stand.

*The Epiphany of Beatrice—The Vanishing of Virgil—The
 Tears of Penitence—Beatrice as Accuser*

WHEN the septentrion of the primal heaven,—
 Which never knew its setting or its rise,
 Nor other cloud but that by man's sin driven,
 And did each one that looked on it apprise
 Of duty, as the lower gives to view 5
 How best to steer to where the haven lies,—
 Stood still awhile, then all that people true
 That 'twixt it and the Gryphon first drew near,
 Turned to the car, as though their peace they knew.

¹⁵¹ The thunder comes, as in *Rev.* vi. 1, x. 3, as the sign of supernatural revelation, and then the procession halts till Dante has passed through his final act of confession and penitence, and is taken (C. xxxi. 100-113) to the breast of the Gryphon Christ.

Didron (*Christ. Iconogr.* i. 315, Millington's transl., quoted in Longfellow's *Dante*) gives a striking description of a stained-glass window in the Church of Notre Dame de Brou, representing the triumph of Christ, in many ways resembling that of this Canto, but with some striking differences, chiefly that the car is drawn, not by the gryphon, but by the four living creatures who represent the Gospels. Didron, it may be noted, takes the gryphon as the symbol, not of Christ, but of the Pope, a view which seems to me untenable, as turning the Ghibelline poet, the author of the *De Monarchiâ*, into a thorough-paced Ultramontanist.

¹ The Septentrion, the Ursa Major of the primal heaven, is found in the seven gifts of the Spirit, symbolised in the seven candelabra. These, as eternal in their essence, knew no rising or setting. No cloud obscured them but the sin which hindered men from seeing them.

⁹ The Apostles and Prophets, the writers of the books of the Old Testament and New Testament, looked to Christ and His Church as the source of the true peace.

And one of them, as if by Heaven sent there, 10
 Sang, "*Veni, Sponsa*, come from Lebanon!"
 Three times, and all the rest took up the air.
 As at the last call every blessed one
 Shall quickly from his cavern-tomb return,
 And "*Alleluias*" sing with voice re-won, 15
 So where the car divine was onward borne
 A hundred rose *ad vocem tanti Senis*,
 Angels and heralds of the life eterne;
 And all said "*Benedictus es qui venis*,"
 And, scattering flowers above them and around, 20
 "*Manibus O date lilia plenis!*"
 Oft have I seen how all the east was crowned
 At very break of day with roseate hue,
 And all the sky beside serener found;
 And the sun's face o'erclouded came in view, 25
 The vapours so attempering its powers,
 That the eye gazed long while, nor weary grew:

10 The voice may be that of Solomon, as the writer of the Song of Songs, or the song itself personified. The words of *Song Sol.* iv. 8 had often been applied to the Church, notably by St. Bernard (*In Cant.* 24, 25), as the Spouse of Christ. Dante is bold enough to apply them to the transfigured Beatrice, as the impersonation of heavenly wisdom, the type also of a glorified womanhood. *Prov.* viii. and *Wisd.* vii. may have seemed to him to justify the transfer.

15 A *v. l.* gives *alleviando* = lifting up their voice, instead of *alleluiando*; another *carne* instead of *voce*; but the authority of MSS. is with the readings which I have followed.

17 Who are the "hundred" spoken of? Angels, as in lines 28, 82, or prophets, or the preachers of the Church. Perhaps we ask not wisely for an over-detailed interpretation.

19 The cry raised is that with which the Christ was received on His entry into Jerusalem. They are referred by some commentators to Beatrice, the masculine *Benedictus* notwithstanding; by some to Dante himself. It seems better to take them in their primary application, Christ being thought of as sharing in the triumph of His Church and the manifestation of the Divine Wisdom (*Eph.* iii. 9, 10).

21 The quotation from *Æn.* vi. 884 is applied in a way that contrasts strangely with its use by Virgil. There the flowers are floral offerings for the tomb of the dead Marcellus. Here they greet Beatrice as the bride from Lebanon, and are scattered by the hands of the angels, whose presence was perhaps implied in l. 17. And yet perhaps there mingled with the new symbolism some memories of the time when he had seen lilies scattered on the grave of Beatrice, as its starting-point, and had then heard the *In exitu Israel de Ægypto*.

And so, enveloped in a cloud of flowers,
 Which leapt up, scattered by angelic hands,
 And part within and part without sent showers, 20
 Clad in white veil with olive-wreathèd bands,
 A lady in a mantle bright and green
 O'er robe of fiery glow before me stands.
 And then my spirit, which so long had been
 Without the wonder that had once dismayed, 35
 When that dear presence by mine eyes was seen,
 Though nothing more to vision was displayed,
 Through secret power that passed from her to me
 The mighty spell of ancient love obeyed.
 Soon as I stricken stood, in act to see, 40
 By that high power that pierced me with his dart
 Ere yet I passed from out my boyhood free,
 I to the left with wistful look did start,
 As when an infant seeks his mother's breast,
 When fear or anguish vex his troubled heart, 45

32 We enter on what we might almost describe as the apotheosis of Beatrice. To us it seems strange and startling; but the 13th century was familiar not only with the *cultus* of the Virgin Mother, with all its tendencies to develop the adoration of what Goethe has called the "ever-feminine" element in man's life, but also with something like an *apochristosis* of St. Francis, and with the feminine impersonations of his distinctive attributes. Those who remember the Marriage with Poverty or the Tower of Chastity in the frescoes at Assisi will not wonder that Dante (who was probably with Giotto when he painted them) should have sought to immortalise the memory of one who had been to him the type of purest wisdom with something of the same honour. And after all, the prose of the *V. N.* had all but anticipated the poetry of the *Commedia*. There Beatrice was "the queen of all virtues" (c. 10). Heaven calls for her presence (c. 19). When she died she was taken to share the glory of the Queen of Heaven (c. 29). Here, at all events, if anywhere, we need to remember Ruskin's *dictum* that Dante saw, but did not invent, the things which he describes (note on *H.* xii. 76). The colours of the garments are those often combined in early Italian paintings of the Madonna of the 13th century, and are symbolical—the white of the purity of faith, the green of the freshness of hope, the crimson of the glow of love. In the *V. N.* Beatrice appears sometimes in crimson, sometimes in white, but green is absent (Bähr, *Symb.* i. 316-340).

34 The new meeting recalls the mingled emotions of the old, the pulse beating, head swimming, strength collapsing (*V. N.* c. 2). So it had been when he was nine; so it was when he was thirty-five, the ideal date of the poem; so it was also, we may believe, when he wrote the *Purgatorio* in 1314 (?). The poet's soul, like that of the Psalmist, is "as a weaned child" (*Ps.* cxxxi. 2).

To say to Virgil: "Trembling, fear-opprest,
 Is every drop of blood in every vein;
 I know that old flame's tokens manifest."
 But Virgil then had left me to my pain,
 Virgil, my sweetest father, to whose hand, 50
 Virgil's, I gave myself, true health to gain:
 Not all from which our mother great was banned
 Availed, though now my cheeks with dew had grown
 All cleansed, the tears that stained them to command.
 "Dante, weep not because thy Virgil's gone; 55
 Weep not as yet; as yet weep thou no more;
 For other sword-wounds must thy tears flow down."
 As when an admiral from stern looks o'er,
 Or prow, the crowd that other ships doth man,
 And gives them nobler courage than before, 60
 There, where the left rim of the chariot ran,
 When at the sound of mine own name I turned,
 Which here perforce recorded men must scan,

⁴⁸ The last words addressed to Virgil are pre-eminently Virgilian (*Æn.* iv. 23), "*Agnosco veteris vestigia flammæ.*"

⁴⁹ And so the pilgrim parts from the friend and companion and guide of past years, and turns from human to divine wisdom. There was a wrench to the natural man in parting with what had been the joy and strength of his life, even though it was to enter into a higher blessedness. We read between the lines what has been the experience of thousands who, having found many "goodly pearls," part with the chiefest and best for the "one pearl of great price." There is great joy in the exchange, but not even the new-found delights of Paradise can stay the tears at parting with what has before been the stay and consolation of the pilgrim's life. The eclogues that passed between Dante and Joannes de Virgilio in the last two years of the former's life show that he did not abandon the study of his master's works. The pathos of the farewell, the threefold iteration of the name, has its starting-point in the like iteration of "Eurydice" in *Georg.* iv. 524-527.

⁵⁵ Noticeable as being the one solitary instance, with the possible exception of *Par.* xxvi. 104, in which the poet brings in his own name. Beatrice, as the symbol of the transfigured conscience of humanity, speaks to the baptismal name which was the symbol of his spiritual personality. Line 63 contains the *apologia* for what might look like egotism. We are reminded of the rare occasion on which the great Master addressed His disciples by their name (*Matt.* xvi. 17; *Luke* xxii. 31; *John* xiv. 9, xxi. 15).

⁵⁸ Possibly a reminiscence, like that of *H.* xxi. 7, of what had been seen at Venice.

⁶¹ It will be remembered that the four cardinal or natural virtues were on the left side of the Christ, to which Dante now turns.

I saw the lady, whom I erst discerned
 Veiled underneath the angelic festal show, 65
 Beyond the stream with eyes that on me yearned,
 Although the veil that from her head did flow,
 By the leaves circled to Minerva dear,
 Allowed no glimpse of that which lay below, 70
 Queen-like in look and gesture, yet severe,
 She then resumed as one whose speech flows free,
 Yet keeps behind a speech more hard to bear :
 "Behold! in me thy Beatrice see :
 How didst thou deem thee fit to climb the hill?
 Didst thou not know that here the blessed be?" 75
 Mine eyes then fell upon the waters still,
 But there myself beholding, to the grass
 I turned, such shame upon my brow weighed ill.
 As mother to her son for proud doth pass, 80
 So she to me, for with a bitter twang
 Tastes pity which in sternness doth o'erpass.
 She held her peace, and from the angels rang
 "*In te speravi, Domine,*" but they
 No farther than the "*pedes meos*" sang.

⁶⁵ The "festal show" was the cloud of flowers from angelic hands described on l. 28.

⁶⁸ The olive crown of l. 31 is identified with the wreath of Minerva, and points to Beatrice as the representative of Celestial Wisdom.

⁷⁰ The queen-like severity of Beatrice reminds us of the words of *Conv.* iii. 15, in which Dante speaks of Philosophy as appearing to him at first as proud and disdainful, perhaps also of *Ecclus.* iv. 17. The question reminds us of *Matt.* iii. 7. Had the penitent counted the cost of his pilgrimage? Was he prepared for the final discipline without which it would fail of its purpose?

⁷⁴ The question implies that the work of purification was as yet incomplete. The pilgrim is cleansed from the seven *Peccata*, the concrete forms of sin, but there is yet a root-sin which has to be confessed and removed before conscience is at peace.

⁷⁶ Lethe is not yet Lethe to the pilgrim. The river reflects him to himself in all his shame and confusion. Line 79 presents another of the pictures of child-life which are among the special beauties of the *Commedia*. Who has not felt that even in a mother's pity there is a bitterness of reproof?

⁸³ The limit which the angels reach is suggestive. Dante has reached the "large room," the *locus spatiosus* of *Ps.* xxxi. 9. The angels will not go further into the passionate complaint that follows, for they mean the psalm to be, as Dante had felt it to be, a psalm of consolation. To him it is an appeal to Beatrice to have compassion on the penitent, and tears

E'en as the snows that on the tall trees stay, 85
 Along Italia's backbone are congealed,
 Swept on and bound as winds Sclavonian play,
 Then trickling flow, the whole vast mass unsealed,
 At the mere breath of blast from shadeless clime,
 As candles near the fire their substance yield, 90
 So stood I tearless, sighless, for a time,
 While yet they sang whose praise ascends on high,
 Following th' eternal spheres in ceaseless chime.
 But when I heard in their sweet melody
 How me they pitied, more than if they said, 95
 "Why, lady, dost thou thus his spirit try?"
 The ice that all around my heart was laid
 Passed into wind and water, and with pain,
 Through mouth and eyes from breast its issue made.
 She on the aforesaid margin of the wain 100
 Still standing, to those creatures ever blest
 Then turned her speech, and then I heard the strain :
 "Ye in the day eternal know no rest,
 So that nor night nor sleep from you can steal
 One step upon the world's great path imprest ; 105
 Therefore my answer greater care must seal,
 That he may hear me well who there doth weep,
 And so a grief to guilt proportioned feel.
 Not only as the wheels majestic sweep
 That guide each seed to its appointed end, 110
 According as the stars their concert keep,

come to his relief. The psalm occurs in the *Rom. Brev.* in the Matins for Tuesday. Line 93 is obviously an allusion to Plato's thought of the music of the spheres (Cic. *Somn. Scip.* c. 5).

⁸⁵ The landscape scene, such as may have been seen from Perugia or Assisi, takes its place side by side with that of *H.* xxiv. 1-15 for completeness and beauty.

¹⁰⁰ A *v. l.* gives *destra*, "the right-hand margin," but *detta*, which I have adopted, is every way preferable. There is no adequate reason for assuming a change of position since l. 61.

¹⁰³ The phrase comes probably from the *dies æternitatis* of 2 *Pet.* iii. 18. The thought is that the angels rest not night nor day ; that, as in the teaching of Aquinas (*Summ.* i. 57. 1), they know all things, past, present, future ; not as men know them, through the senses, but by direct act of the intellect.

¹⁰⁹ The lines count up all the influences which had contributed to endow

But through the bounteous graces God doth send,
 Which have such lofty vapours for their rain,
 No mortal can his glance so far extend,
 He, when his new life he did first attain, 115
 Potentially was such that every good
 In him had power a wondrous height to gain.
 But all the more perverse, and wild, and rude
 Becomes the soil, with ill seed, left untilled,
 As 'tis with more of natural strength endued. 120
 Awhile my face was strong his life to build,
 And I, unveiling to him my young eyes,
 In the straight path to lead him on was skilled.
 So soon as I had reached the point where lies
 Our second age, and I my life had changed, 125
 Me he forsook, and chose another prize.

Dante with the promise and potency of good. These were (1) those of the spheres and the stars which move in them, as in *H.* xv. 55, *Par.* xxii. 112; (2) the graces of the Spirit. These, if habit had been allowed to ripen them, might have developed into highest excellence. As in the title of the book so named, so here also we hesitate between the two possible meanings of *Vita Nuova*, as the epoch of a new era in Dante's life, or as simply = youth. I incline in both cases to the former.

¹¹⁸ The thought is that of the familiar *corruptio optimi pessima*, perhaps also of *Heb.* vi. 8 and *Isai.* v. 1-5.

¹²¹ Commentators as usual group themselves into two ranks, (1) taking the words that follow as referring to the living personal Beatrice; (2) as having absolutely no reference to her, but indicating only (a) the orthodoxy of Dante's early faith and the purity of his youthful life, or (b) his early initiation into some Ghibelline or Manichæan association. At the risk of trying to unite what might seem two incompatible theories, I adopt both (1) and (2a). From the first the living Beatrice, even as a child, had roused the boy Dante to the consciousness of a higher life possible through wisdom. When in mature life he followed the wise of heart of all ages in taking woman's beauty as the symbol of that wisdom (*Prov.* viii., *Wisd.* iv., *Ecclesi.* li., Plato, *Symp.*, Boethius), no other face than hers came before his inner vision. Her eyes were something more than "demonstrations" (*Conv.* iii. 15). He could not look on them or recall them without higher intuitions than those of which he had before been conscious.

¹²⁵ The second age begins at twenty-five (*Conv.* iv. 24), and Beatrice died, or rather "changed her life," in 1290 (June 9th), precisely at the threshold of that age. The efforts of the allegorists to bring the death of the impersonal Beatrice into their scheme are a curiosity of literature, but—

"Non ragioniam di lor, ma guarda e passa."

Following the clue which I have taken, I see in his giving himself to others both his wandering affections and his erratic speculations, the "*Donna Gentile*" of *V. N.*, and a philosophy which, beginning with Boethius,

And when I had from flesh to spirit ranged,
 And loveliness and virtue in me grew,
 I was to him less dear and more estranged.
 His feet he turned to way that was not true, 130
 Following of good the semblance counterfeit,
 Which ne'er to promise gives fulfilment due.
 Nought it availed the Spirit to entreat,
 Wherewith, in visions oft and otherwise,
 I called him back, but little heed to meet. 135
 So low he fell, that ways, however wise,
 Were all too feeble found his soul to save,
 Save showing him the lost ones' miseries.
 For this I trod the gateways of the grave,
 And unto him who thus far was his guide, 140
 The prayers were borne which with my tears I gave.
 The sovran will of God would be defied
 If Lethe should be passed, and such a food
 Be tasted, yet no reckoning be supplied
 Of penitence that pours its tears in flood." 145

passed on to Averrhoes, and tended to Materialism or Pantheism. These form the first two stages of what has been called the "Trilogy" of Dante's life. Comp. Witte, *D. F.* i. 141-182 on the *Trilogy of Dante's Life*. Even Dante's marriage, the result not of spontaneous affection, but of the pressure of the advice of friends, may have seemed to him, as he looked back on it, to have been an unfaithfulness both to the truth and to its personal embodiment. In his studies, in his convivial hours with Forese (C. xxiii. 115), in his home life, in his political ambitions, he had been following false images of good.

134 The fact stated is a striking revelation of Dante's inner life. His visions of the night were haunted, as Milton's were by the form of his second wife, by the ideal beauty of the Beatrice whom he had lost. He awoke, but only to descend to the lower level of his daily life, or, it may be, lower still. A whole volume of experiences is wrapt up in the word "otherwise," which, though it may include waking visions as distinct from dreams, can scarcely be confined to them. Comp. *V. N.* c. 40, 43.

138 The words remind us of *Ps.* lxxiii. 17. The only effectual safeguard against walking with the scorners and the sensual was to show the wanderer "the end of these men," of the sensual, the heretics, the unbelievers. The verses epitomise the history of *H.* ii.

143 Something more is needed for the absolute clearness and peace of which Lethe is the symbol than any confession of single faults classified under certain heads. The repentance is completed only when, as in *Ps.* li., *Rom.* vii., the penitent goes to the *fons et origo* of the whole, the departure from his first love, human and divine, through which he lost his purity and peace.

*The sharp Agony of Repentance—The Baptism of Lethe—The
new Companion—The Gryphon as the Bread of Heaven*

"O THOU who art beyond the sacred stream,"
Turning her utterance then point-blank to me,
Which even edgewise keen and sharp did seem,
She then began again immediately,
"Say, say if this be true; with charge so great 5
Thine own confession should commingled be."
So crushed was I beneath that burden's weight,
That my voice moved, and yet all broken fled,
Ere from its organs speech was separate.
Awhile she bore it, then, "What think'st thou?" said; 10
"Answer me now; for those thy memories sad
Are by the stream not yet extinguishèd."
Confusion and dismay together bade
A "Yes" from out my lips in such wise flow,
That to hear it sight's help must needs be had. 15
E'en like an arbalest, when string and bow
Are overstrained, and with full force no more
The arrow to its destined mark doth go,
So I gave way beneath that burden sore,
Pouring full flood of many tears and sighs, 20
And my voice failed ere half its course was o'er.
Whence she to me: "Why didst thou not arise
To my desires, that thou should'st love the Good,
Beyond which nought that men aspire to lies,

² The reproaches of C. xxx. 103-145 had been indirect, spoken to the angels, though at Dante. Now Beatrice's voice is like that of Nathan, "*Thou art the man.*"

¹² The pilgrim had not yet passed through Lethe, and the old sins of sense and spirit might well therefore be recalled.

¹³⁻²¹ The picture of shame and confusion of face has scarcely a parallel in literature, save in the Seven Penitential Psalms, of which Dante's penitence is more or less the embodiment. The feeble "yes," seen in the movement of the lips rather than heard, is all that at first finds utterance. Was Dante transferring to the shores of Lethe the feeling which he had known in the confessional, at Rome or elsewhere, under the hands of some expert priest, skilled in the discipline of souls?

²² The natural interpretation of the words that follow is simple enough. The personal Beatrice reproves the man who had loved her for having, after

What pits that lay across, what chains withstood, 25
 So that thy hope of passing farther on
 Thou shouldst have laid aside in reckless mood?
 And what allurements or what vantage shone
 Upon the brow of others to thine eye,
 So that thy steps to seek for them were won?" 30
 Then, after I had drawn one bitter sigh,
 Scarce had I voice wherewith to answer her,
 And my lips struggled hard to make reply.
 Weeping I said, "The things that present were
 With their false pleasure led my steps aside 35
 Soon as thy face was hidden from me there."

her death, proved faithless to her memory and transferred his affection to others. The non-natural interpretation of the allegorists which finds in Beatrice only the symbol of Theology in the abstract, reproaching her votary for having turned aside to secular studies, is encumbered with the difficulty of defining what is meant by the death of Theology. An example of what might have been, had he acted otherwise, is found in the life of Ken, and seems so far removed from Dante that it is hard for us at first to realise the thought that there was any parallelism between them. Few writers can be more contrasted with each other than the authors of the *Commedia* and of the *Morning and Evening Hymns*; and yet, as I read the life of Ken, and especially his *Funeral Sermon on Lady Margaret Maynard*, the thought comes into my mind that he too had had in her his vision of a Beatrice, whom he loved as a guide and teacher, with no touch of sensual passion, and whose influence was strong to purify and ennoble his whole life. And when she died she became to him as one who had never "known any sin but that of ignorance or infirmity," and who had passed to "the bosom of her Heavenly Bridegroom, where how radiant her crown is, how ecstatic her joy, how high exalted she is in degree of glory, is impossible to be described." By a curious coincidence, he too turns to the *Veni, sponsa de Libano*, to the "Bridegroom's garden, where, when the south wind blows, the several spices and gums, the spikenard and the cinnamon, the frankincense and the myrrh," blend their fragrance, as a parable of the excellences of the "gracious woman" whom he honours (Ken, *Prose Works*, ed. 1838, p. 124).

²³ The Highest Good is none other than God Himself. *Comp. H.* iii. 18, and *Conv.* ii. 8, iv. 22. To this Dante, under Beatrice's influence, had for a time aspired, but his first love waxed cold.

²⁹ The MSS. vary between *altri*=other goods or desires, and *altre*, other women. The former seems preferable.

³⁴ The confession of the solitary "yes" is expanded. The penitent has been misled by counterfeit shows of good (*C.* xxx. 131). The loss of Beatrice's presence had turned him to them for consolation. He forsook the heavenly life for that of earth. The "gentle lady" of *V. N.* c. 36, may have been, as many think, one such comforter (*Conv.* ii. 2). In *Conv.* ii. 16 he identifies that "gentle lady," perhaps in an over-subtle afterthought, with Philosophy, but there is no tone of penitence or shame. Are we, as some have thought, to see in his confession here a recantation of the language of the *Convito*, an acknowledgment that he had loved Wisdom not wisely but

And she: "Hadst thou been silent or denied
 What thou confessest, not less known had been
 Thy guilt: from such a Judge thou canst not hide.
 But when a man's own mouth is open seen 40
 Himself of sin accusing, then the wheel
 In our court turns against the sword-edge keen.
 Howe'er this be, that thou more shame mayst feel
 For that thine error, and in other years,
 Hearing the Sirens, more thine heart mayst steel, 45
 List thou, and cease awhile to sow in tears;
 So learn thou how, though buried in the tomb,
 I should have led thee up the heavenly stairs.
 Never to thee did such full rapture come
 From art or nature, as from that fair frame 50
 I dwelt in, for which now earth finds a home;
 And if to thee through my departure came
 The loss of highest joy, what mortal thing
 Should then have stirred thee with hot passion's
 flame?
 By the first stroke that did experience bring 55
 Of earth's false shows, thou shouldst have upward
 striven
 Thy flight to me, no longer such, to wing.
 Ill was it when thy pinions down were driven
 To wait new wounds,—some girl of little price,
 Or other vain thing, for but brief use given. 60

too well, or to refer the wanderings that he now speaks of to aberrations of another kind? Of the two, I incline to the latter view, but both may be combined.

⁴¹ Beatrice proclaims the laws of pardon in the court of Heaven (*Ps.* xxxi. 5; *Prov.* xxviii. 13; 1 *John* i. 9).

⁴⁵ The Sirens are identified, as in *C.* xix. 19, *Par.* xii. 8, with sensual pleasure. They would scarcely be fit symbols of the canon or civil law, or of Aristotelian philosophy as contrasted with the Theology which the allegorists identify with Beatrice.

⁵⁵ Even the earthly beauty in which Dante had found a symbol and a witness of the highest beatitude had proved to be perishable, and the fact that it proved so should have led him to seek the things that are above.

⁵⁹ The *pargoletta*, or "girl of little price," has been identified, according to men's wanderings of thought, (1) with the *Donna Gentile* of the *V. N.* c. 36; (2) with Gemma Donati, Dante's wife; (3) with the Gentucca of *C.*

The callow bird makes trial twice or thrice ;
 But all in vain the net is spread, or dart
 Shot from the bow before the fledged one's eyes."
 As little children, dumb with shame's keen smart,
 Will listening stand with eyes upon the ground, 65
 Owning their faults with penitential heart,
 So then stood I, and she said, "Since 'tis found
 So hard for thee to listen, lift thy beard ;
 In seeing shall thy pain yet more abound."
 With less resistance is a stout holm cleared 70
 From out the soil by wind from our clime sent,
 Or land where great Iarbas was revered,
 Than I my chin at her command upbent ;
 And when she said "thy beard" instead of "face,"
 I knew the barbed sting of her argument. 75

xxiv. 37 ; (4) with the secular wisdom which took the place of Theology in Dante's studies. It does not seem to me probable that he would have used so contemptuous a term in reference to (1) or (2). (3) is excluded by the fact that Beatrice speaks in 1300 of the past, and that Gentucca was then a child. (4) belongs to a theory which, so far as it denies the personality of Beatrice, I have throughout rejected. I incline accordingly to the belief that the words refer to some passing wanderings of desire in the interval between Beatrice's death and Dante's marriage, those wanderings synchronising, it may be, with mental aberrations.

61 Comp. *Prov.* i. 17. Line 64 gives another of the studies of child-life which we have so often noted (C. xxx. 79).

68 Curiously enough the beard is wanting in all portraits of Dante. The Bargello portrait gives almost the smoothness of youth. The plaster cast taken after death is nearly as smooth. To wear a beard seems to have been the exception rather than the rule in the latter half of the 13th century ; yet the words here clearly imply that he wore one in A.D. 1300. So also ran the common speech of those who said, "See the man who has been in Hell ; how his hair and beard are scorched !" See the curious dissertation on this point by Scarabelli (*Barba probabile di Dante Alighieri*, Bologna, 1874). The point of the word is, of course, that he could not plead youth as an excuse. He was twenty-five when Beatrice died, thirty-five when she lays bare before him the record of the ten years that lay between. Bocc. (*V. D.*) speaks of his beard as an indication of his grief and general neglect of conventionalities on Beatrice's death.

71 Most MSS. give "*our* clime" (*nostral vento*), but it seems a curious way of describing the North for an Italian. Possibly Dante wrote after a long experience of a cold spring in the Apennines. The reading *austral* has little to recommend it. *Butt.* ingeniously suggests *maestral*, *sc.* the *mistral*, or master-wind. The land of Iarbas, king of Libya, and son of Ammon (*Æn.* iv. 196), points to the south wind.

And as my face I lifted up a space,
 Mine eyes then saw those primal creatures blest
 Had ceased to scatter flowers all o'er the place.
 And then those orbs, their fear still manifest,
 Saw Beatrice to the Creature turn 80
 Which Natures twain in Person one possessed.
 Beneath her veil beyond the river's bourne
 She seemed to me her old self to excel,
 More than, when here, all others ever born.
 So did the sting of penitence impel, 85
 That of all else, what most had drawn me on
 To love it, now I loathed as foe most fell.
 And such self-knowledge preyed my heart upon,
 That I fell conquered ; and what I was then
 She knows who gave the first occasion. 90
 Then, when my heart new outward strength did gain,
 The lady fair, whom I had found alone,
 Near me I saw, saying, "Hold me, hold," again.
 Up to the throat within the river thrown,
 She drew me on behind her, while she went, 95
 As though a shuttle o'er the stream had flown ;
 And as my way to that blest shore I went,
 "*Asperges me*" I heard so sweetly sung,
 I cannot it in thought or words present.

⁷⁸ The scattering was that of the flowers in C. xxx. 20.

⁸¹ The definite use of the dogmatic language of the Church's faith fixes the meaning of the Gryphon, and unless we assume Dante to have been a "*hérétique en délire*" writing under a mask, excludes every other interpretation. The fact that Beatrice turns to the Gryphon represents the truth that the Wisdom which she represents, contemplating the Divine Nature, rests at last in the mystery of the Incarnation. So the *Comm.* ascribed to the poet's son Pietro. In that contemplation she glowed with a new beauty that surpassed the old.

⁸³ A *v. l.* gives *verde* instead of *vincer*,—"beyond the river's green bourne,"—probably a correction to avoid the repetition of *vincer*. Witte conjectures "*che vincea*" in l. 84, and this I have followed. The vision of the supreme beauty of holiness completes the conversion. All lower shows of good vanish in its presence. Now therefore is the time for Lethe, and Matilda is at hand, the type of active, cheering sympathy—hardly, with *Scart.*, of the absolving work of the priesthood, any more than Beatrice is the type of the Pope's infallibility—to lead him safely through the river.

⁸⁶ "Shuttle" answers to Ital. *spola*. *V. ll.* give *stola* = a garment, or *scola*, said to be an old Venetian word for "*gondola*."

⁸⁸ *Asperges me* (*Ps.* li. 9) entered into the ritual of Confession, and was

And then her arms the beauteous lady flung 100
 Around my head, and plunged me in the tide,
 So that the water flowed down o'er my tongue ;
 Thence me she drew, and led me, purified,
 Within the dance of that quaternion bright,
 And each embraced me in her arms oped wide. 105
 "Here we are nymphs, in Heaven are stars of light ;
 Ere Beatrice trod earth's lower ways,
 We were her handmaids by God's order right ;
 We to her eyes will lead thee, but to gaze 110
 Upon the joyous light within, the three
 Whose glance goes deeper must thy vision raise."
 Thus singing they began, and then led me,
 With them conjoined, towards the Gryphon's breast,
 Where Beatrice turned to us we see.
 They said, "Take heed thou give thine eyes no 115
 rest ;
 Before those emeralds thee we now have set
 Whence Love against thee drew his weapons blest."

said when the priest sprinkled the penitent with holy water. Dante may have heard it so spoken, or, it may be, sung as an anthem.

⁹⁹ Memory can reproduce the sweetest music of earth, such as Casella's (C. ii. 113), but that of Paradise escapes it.

¹⁰¹ The immersion of the body symbolised the purification of the senses and the active life; that of the head and the swallowing of the water the cleansing of thought and memory, the "inward parts" (*Ps.* li. 6; *Heb.* x. 22) of man's nature.

¹⁰⁶ The four nymphs who embrace the pilgrim are, as in C. xxix. 130, the cardinal virtues. Augustine (*Ep.* 52) had given a precedent for so describing them. But their ministry is not limited to man's life on earth. They belong to the eternal order, and are, as in C. i. 23-27, stars in heaven. Comp. *Par.* xxiii. 26 for a like combination.

¹⁰⁷ Have the words any point of contact with the personal Beatrice, or only with the mystical representative of Divine Wisdom? I answer the first question in the affirmative. Dante held the doctrine of the creation of souls, of their gifts and graces as being endowments from God (C. xvi. 85-90, xxv. 70-76).

¹¹¹ The three are the Christian graces, Faith, Hope, Charity (C. xxix. 120), which, in their supernatural power, lead to a fuller knowledge of God than the natural virtues (*Conv.* iii. 14, 15).

¹¹³ Dante is in harmony with the profoundest thoughts of all masters of the spiritual life. The highest outcome of the work of virtue, grace, wisdom is that they lead the soul to Christ.

¹¹⁶ Modern taste would have chosen "sapphires" rather than emeralds, but the thought that there is a beauty in a gem-like greenness of eye is not

A thousand longings, hotter than e'er yet
 Was flame, mine eyes to those clear bright eyes
 drew,
 Whose steadfast gazing still the Gryphon met. 120
 As the sun's image in a glass we view,
 So was that twy-formed Creature beaming seen,
 Now with these looks, now those, reflected true.
 Think, Reader, what my wonder must have been,
 When I beheld the object changeless stand, 125
 Yet in its image changed in form and mien,
 While, full of joy, yet slow to understand,
 My soul its hunger fed with nourishment
 Which satisfies, yet stimulates, demand.
 Showing in every act their high descent, 130
 The other three moved on to harmonies
 With their angelic dancing in consent.
 "Turn, Beatrice, turn thy holy eyes,"
 So ran their song, "to this thy servant true,
 Who to see thee hath dared such high emprise. 135
 For grace' sake grant this grace, to yield to view
 Thy face to him, that he may well discern,
 What thou dost hide, thy second beauty new.

peculiar to Dante. Comp. Shakesp. *Romeo and Juliet*, iv. 5, "An eagle hath not so green an eye;" or a quotation from Swinburne's *Felice* in *N. Q.* 6th Ser., i. 506—

"Those eyes, the greenest of things blue,
 The bluest of things grey."

See also letters in *N. Q.*, 6th Ser. i. 81, 506.

¹¹⁸ The fire of love follows as the completion of the work of the fire that burns away the dross, and the Incarnate Word is the object of that love.

¹²² The thought is that of the "manifold," the "very varied" wisdom of God (*Eph.* iii. 10). The central truth remains one and indivisible, but it has many aspects, and the soul that looks on the face of wisdom sees there the glory of the Christ. The hymn of Clem. Al. *Pædag. ad fin.* may be referred to as an illustration. A hundred parables and types float before the mind's eye, but Christ, one and the same, is "all in all."

¹²⁹ The thought may have come either from *Eccclus.* xxiv. 29 or from Greg. M. *Hom.* 16, "*Saturitas appetitum parit.*"

¹³² The word for "dance" (*caribo*) deserves a passing note, (1) as found here only, (2) as probably derived from Corybas, and so pointing to a mystic orgiastic dance like that of the Corybantes. Some, however, take it as = *garbo* = comeliness or grace.

¹³⁸ The "second beauty" is at once the transfigured glory of the personal

O splendour of the living light eterne!
 Who is there that beneath Parnassus' shade 140
 Hath paled, or quenched his thirst from its fresh
 burn,
 And would not seem to have his mind down-weighed,
 Seeking what thou appearedst to make known,
 O'ershadowed by the heavens that music made,
 When to the open air thy form was shown?" 145

CANTO XXXII

*The full Vision of the glorified Beatrice—The Tree of
 Knowledge—The Ascension of the Gryphon—The sacred
 Chariot and its wondrous History*

So eager were mine eyes, and so attent
 My ten years' craving thirst to satisfy,
 That every other sense was lost and spent;
 Beyond, like walls that bounded either eye,
 Reigned simple nescience, so that sweet smile lent 5
 To the old net resistless mastery.
 And when perforce my face awhile was bent
 Towards the left by those Divine Ones fair,
 For that I heard them say, "Ah, too intent!"
 And as clear vision fails before the glare, 10
 In eyes but lately smitten by the sun,
 So for a while nought saw I anywhere.
 But when my sight a little strength re-won—
 I say "a little" with the "much" compared
 Of that bright glory I was forced to shun— 15

Beatrice and the glory of the Divine Wisdom, which Dante had hitherto seen as through a veil, and now gazes on face to face.

² The *V. N.* fixes the date of Beatrice's death as June 9, 1290. Here there is absolutely no standing-room for the theory that Beatrice = Theology. The "old net" is that of the beauty which had, as in the *V. N.*, taken him in its meshes and held him fast.

⁹ Even the contemplation of Divine Wisdom may become exhausting for one who is yet in the flesh. The ecstasy of the beatific vision requires the

I saw that to the right hand had repaired
 That glorious army, and had wheeled full round,
 So that their face the sun and seven flames shared.
 As 'neath its shields, for due protection found,
 A cohort with its flag doth wheel and move, 20
 Ere the whole force its march about hath wound,
 That army of Heaven's kingdom high above,
 Which led the way, had all before us passed,
 Ere the car's pole its power to turn did prove.
 Then to the wheels those ladies turned at last, 25
 And then the Gryphon moved his blessed load,
 Yet so that not one feather shook through haste.
 The lady fair who through the ford me towed,
 Statius and I, we tracked the wheel's path well,
 Whose orbit marked with smaller arc the road. 30
 So, passing the high forest, where none dwell,
 Through fault of her who did the serpent trust,
 Angelic music with our footsteps fell.
 Perchance an arrow from the bow would just
 In three flights such a distance reach as we 35
 Our march, when Beatrice stepped down, had thrust.
 "Adam," I heard them all speak murmuringly:
 Then they a tree encompassed stript and bare,
 No flower or leaf on any bough to see;

immortal eye. For mortals the excess of light brings darkness, and they need to recover from it and return to the things of earth. The comparison implies perhaps a reminiscence of Dante's personal experience of weak and inflamed eyes (*V. N. c. 40*; *Conv. iii. 6*).

¹⁶ The chariot procession had come from the east, like "the dayspring from on high" (*Luke i. 78*). It now turns back, looking to the sun, and with the seven candlesticks in front. We ask what does the retreat mean? Is it like the departure of *Astræa*, the vanishing of an ideal, the symbol of the decline and fall of the Church left in the world from its primal glory and completeness? The calmness of the movement (*l. 27*) seems to indicate the truth that as long as the Church was guided by Christ there was no disorder or confusion in it.

²⁸ Matilda and Statius, a *muta persona* from the time of his entry on the earthly Paradise, follow the chariot on its right side, *i.e.*, in company with the three supernatural graces, Faith, Hope, and Love.

³¹ The earthly Paradise is void and without inhabitant through the primal sin of Eve.

³⁷ The reproaches remind us of Milton's "For this we may thank Adam"

Its topmast branches, wide-spread everywhere, 40
 The more it rises, would from Indians gain
 In their woods wonder for its stature rare.
 "O Gryphon! blest art thou who dost refrain
 Thy beak from that same branch, to taste so sweet,
 Since thence man's inward parts felt torturing 45
 pain."
 Thus round the strong tree, all in order meet,
 The others cried, and that twy-natured One,
 "Thus is the seed of all right kept complete."
 And turning to the pole which he drew on,
 He brought it close below that widowed stem, 50
 And left there bound what was indeed its own.
 And as the plants we know, when falls on them
 The sun's great light with other radiance blent,
 Which beams behind the Fishes' starry gem,
 First swell and bud, and then with ornament, 55
 Each of its special tint, are quick renewed,
 Ere the sun's steeds to other stars are bent,

(*P. L.* x. 736). The tree round which the procession halts is primarily that of the knowledge of good and evil (*C.* xxiv. 116, xxxiii. 58), but it becomes, in Dante's manifold interpretation, the symbol also of earthly wisdom and earthly polity, as the tree of life is that of heavenly wisdom and the heavenly kingdom, and therefore of the Roman Empire and Church, as the embodiment of both. It stands in both its aspects stript and bare, but its branches sweep far and wide as the symbol of the Universal Monarchy. For a like imagery comp. *Ezek.* xxxi. 1-7. The reference to "Indians" comes from *Georg.* ii. 122-124, but may also include reminiscences of what had been heard from Marco Polo or other travellers.

44 The Christ had, as in the Temptation, resisted the allurements to which Adam had yielded. He would not yield to those of sense; He would not grasp the glory of the kingdoms of the world (*Matt.* iv. 1-11; *Luke* iv. 1-13).

48 The voice of the Christ confirms the beatitude just uttered. All righteousness is found in self-denial, *i.e.*, in not eating of the forbidden fruit.

49 We enter into yet another, the historical, side of the symbolism. Christ leaves His Church to the care of earthly wisdom as embodied in the Roman Empire. The thought worked out in *Mon.* ii. 2-12 is embodied in the single triplet.

53 The astronomical description points to the season of Pisces (*Iasca = roach*) and Aries in the Zodiac, that is, to spring, when what had seemed dry and withered begins to bud and burgeon.

Less than the rose yet more than violet-hued
 Unfolding, then that tree new growth did gain.
 Whose branches erst so bare and naked showed. 60
 I never heard, nor ever here such strain
 As that they sang is heard by mortal ear,
 Nor could I all its melody sustain.
 If I could paint how ruthless eyes and clear
 Were lulled to sleep with Syrinx' tender lay, 65
 Those eyes to which much watching cost so dear,
 As artist, who with model paints away,
 Then would I picture how asleep I fell:
 Let him try who can slumber well portray.
 Therefore to pass to when I woke 'tis well, 70
 And say that then a brightness rent the veil
 Of sleep, and loud cry, "Rise! what dost thou?
 tell!"
 As once of old the apple-blossoms pale,
 Which with their fruit the angels satiate
 In Heaven, in wedding-feast perpetual, 75
 James, Peter, John were led to contemplate,
 And by them dazzled, at the voice returned
 By which was broken deeper slumber's state,

⁶⁸ The colour can scarcely be other than symbolic. The new foliage of the tree—"miraturque novas frondes" (*Georg.* ii. 82)—is not green, but of the hue which represents the fact that the blood of Christ and the blood of martyrs give a new vitality to the tree of human wisdom and earthly empire, which had seemed so dead.

⁶⁴ The "ruthless eyes" are those of Argus, who, set to watch over Io, was lulled to sleep by Mercury as he told the tale of the loves of Pan and Syrinx and was then slain by him (*Met.* i. 568, 747).

⁶⁷ We note the similitude as appropriate in the artist who had learnt to paint from the life (*V. N.* c. 35). The deep sleep which falls on Dante's soul prepares the way for another apocalyptic vision which takes the place of that which he had seen vanish. It is, it will be seen, of a very different character, telling not of the ideal glory of the Kingdom, but of its earthly vicissitudes. I shall endeavour to deal with this as I have done with its forerunner, giving what seems to me the true interpretation, and not bewildering myself or the reader with wanderings in the labyrinthine mazes of expositors.

⁷³ The transfiguration is described as being to the full glory of the Christ what the apple-blossom is to its fruit. That fruit, *sc.*, the glory of the Man-God, is the delight of the angels, and belongs, as the fruit of the tree of life, to the marriage-supper of the King. As the three disciples were when the vision left them, so was Dante when he awoke from his deep sleep. He

And emptied saw the school in which they learned,
 As of Elias, so of Moses too, 80
 And then their Master's altered garb discerned,
 So I revived, and near me came in view
 That holy lady who my guide had been
 My path along the river to pursue.
 "Where then is Beatrice?" asked I, keen 85
 With eager doubt; and she: "Lo! on the ground
 'Neath the fresh leaves she on the root doth lean.
 See there the company that gird her round;
 The rest the Gryphon follow now on high,
 With melody more sweet and more profound." 90
 And whether she more fully made reply
 I know not, for there came before my gaze
 She who all power to hear more did deny.
 Alone she sat, on ground, of Truth the base,
 Left there as guardian of the mystic car, 95
 Which He bound there who twy-formed nature
 sways.
 Then formed a ring, by movement circular,
 Those seven fair nymphs with torches in their hand,
 Which safe from Aquilo and Auster are.
 "Here a short while thou shalt as woodman stand, 100
 And with me shalt for aye be citizen
 Of that Rome where Christ heads the Roman band.

turns to Matilda as his early friend, and as the type of sympathy and hope (C. xxviii. 40), and asks what it all means—"Where is Beatrice?" He is bidden to look once more. The Christ, and the saints who represent the books of the Old and New Testaments, and the angels, are gone; but she, Divine Wisdom, is still there, left together with the natural and supernatural virtues as the guardian of the Church.

⁹⁴ The *terra vera* of the Italian seemed to require a paraphrase. I take it as indicating the local Rome as the appointed centre of the life at once of the Empire and of the Church (*Mon.* ii. *passim*; *H.* ii. 23). There the tree grows, thither the chariot is brought. The other view, that we should translate "on the bare ground," as indicating the lowliness of Beatrice = Theology = Spiritual Religion, scarcely needs discussion. Comp. C. xiii. 95, xvi. 96.

⁹⁸ The lights in the hands of the Nymphs are obviously the several graces, to which their names answer, manifested in life; possibly also the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit as connected with those graces.

¹⁰⁰ "Here" is defined by the "*terra vera*" of l. 94. It is the earthly

Therefore, for good of evil-living men,
 Look on the chariot, and what there thou see'st,
 When thou to earth returnest, write thou then." 105
 So Beatrice ; and I, who to the least
 Of her commandments gave my homage due,
 Turned eyes and mind to follow her behest.
 Never did fire from cloud its course pursue
 So swiftly downward 'mid the pelting shower, 110
 From the high sphere remotest from our view,
 As I then saw the bird of Jove pass o'er
 Down on the tree its very bark to break,
 Rending the flowers and tender leaves yet more ;
 And that fierce blow did all the chariot shake, 115
 So that it reeled, like ship in sore distress,
 Where, starboard, larboard, waves their onset make.
 Then saw I how a vixen in did press,
 Inside that great triumphant vehicle,
 Which, ravenous, seemed no good food to possess. 120

Roman Empire, embracing all Italian life. Dante, at the assumed date of the vision, had still some years before him of life in that region. But he would find himself there in a forest, not in a home ; if not in a forest like that of *H. i.* 1-3, yet in that which was as different from the true Rome as the earthly Jerusalem was from the heavenly. In that Rome, the Rome where God is Emperor, and Christ, as man, is citizen, Dante should be, with his transfigured Beatrice, the sharer in an endless life (*C. xiii.* 96). I note without comment the chief other interpretation. "When thou diest thou shalt be but a short time in Purgatory, and shalt then pass at once from the earthly to the heavenly Paradise."

104 It is after Dante's manner to give, after the pattern of Daniel, Ezekiel, and St. John, these rapid surveys of history. See the allegory of the "grand old form" of Crete (*H. xiv.* 103-120), and the Roman eagle in *Par. vi.* 37-111. Such surveys furnished ideas which might avail for the reformation of the world.

112 The bird of Jove is with Dante (*Par. vi.* 1) the received symbol of Roman power, as to Ezekiel (*xvii.* 3, 4) it had been of Nebuchadnezzar. It has made its nest in the tree as the type of civil order. It attacks the chariot and injures the tree's foliage. The Emperors persecute the Church, and in so doing bring loss of strength upon the empire.

116 The symbolism was so current that it needs no explanation, but it may be worth noting that in 1300, the assumed date of the vision, Giotto, in Rome, probably with Dante, was painting his famous picture of the *Navicella* for St. Peter's (*Ep. ix.* 5).

119 The vixen, the fox-bitch, is the representative of the heresies, pre-eminently the Arian, which harassed the Church when the persecutions ceased. Those heretics had ceased to feed on the true food of the Church's

But, chiding it for its sins horrible,
 My Lady turned it to such hasty flight,
 As through its fleshless bones was possible.
 Then, by the way whence first it came to sight,
 I saw the eagle to the car descend, 125
 And leave it feathered with its plumage light.
 As from a heart that bitter grief doth rend,
 So came a voice from Heaven, and thus it cried :
 " Ah, bark of mine ! what ill freight thee doth
 bend ? "
 Then the earth seemed to me to open wide, 130
 And 'twixt the wheels a dragon did I see,
 Who pierced with upward tail the chariot's side ;
 And, like a wasp with sting drawn back, did he,
 Coiling the whole length of his evil tail,
 Wrench out the floor and vanish tortuously. 135
 That which remained behind, as fertile vale
 Is clothed with grass, was soon with plumage clad,
 Offered, perchance, with mind where did not fail
 Pure thoughts and good ; and lo ! that vesture had 140
 Covered both pole and wheels in briefer span
 Than sigh keeps open lips of one that's sad.

life, the doctrine of the Scriptures, and they were driven forth by the wisdom, symbolised by Beatrice, of the great Doctors of the Church.

¹²⁶ The eagle clothing the chariot with its own feathers answers to the fabulous Donation of Constantine, in which Dante, though in *Mon.* iii. 10 he had defended it with apologetic limitations, came to see (*H.* xix. 115) the starting-point of the later corruptions of the Church. The ship was thus, as the voice (Christ's or Peter's ?) proclaims, overladen with its freight of worldly possessions. Witte mentions a legend that at the time of the Donation a voice was heard from heaven, "*Hodie diffusum est venenum in Ecclesiâ Dei.*"

¹³⁶ The dragon indicates a new peril which ended in a schism. Historically it may represent the iconoclastic quarrel which divided the Eastern from the Western Church, or the aggressive conquests of Mahomet, who, as in *H.* xxviii. 31, is regarded as the greatest of all schismatics, but the dragon is probably to be taken, as in *Rev.* xii. 3, xiii. 2, as the symbol of the Devil, as the great enemy and divider, working through all human schismatics.

¹³⁷ The temporal power and wealth increased, and appropriated more and more of what had been the riches and prerogative of the Empire, bestowed by Pepin and Charlemagne, as Dante admits, with good intentions, but with disastrous results. The very wheels of the chariot were clothed with the eagle's feathers. Bishops, clergy, monastic orders were all enriched, to

The holy structure, thus transformed, began
 To thrust forth heads from out each separate part,
 Three at the pole, one where each angle ran.
 With horns like oxen, lo ! the three did start, 145
 But for the four, one horn in front was found ;
 Such monster ne'er hath met man's eye or heart.
 Firm as a rock upon high mountain ground,
 I saw a harlot sit at ease thereon,
 Shameless, with wanton eyes that glanced around. 150

their own detriment and that of their people ; and all this came as by leaps and bounds, with a quickness which aggravated the evil.

¹⁴² The seven heads with their ten horns are clearly based upon the vision of the beast in *Rev.* xiii. 1, but the symbolism is somewhat obscure ; all the more so as in *H.* xix. 109 (where see note) the heads and the horns had appeared as belonging to the primitive and uncorrupted Church. The general drift of commentators tends to seeing in them the vices that are opposed to the seven virtues, or the seven gifts of the Spirit, the sins that are transgressions of the ten commandments, as the consequence of the Church's wealth ; but this does not explain why three of the heads have two horns each and the others only one, and generally is scarcely satisfactory. I fear I must say the same of the ingenious conjecture (*Butler*) that the heads represent the seven electors of the Empire as originally nominated by the Pope in virtue of his temporal power, the three heads with two horns answering to the three archbishop-electors (Mayence, Treves, and Cologne), and the others to the four secular princes. At the risk of adding another conjecture to the limbo of vanities I suggest (1) that the four single-horned heads may stand for the four mendicant orders (Dominicans, Franciscans, Carmelites, and Augustinians), which were recognised by Gregory X. in the Council of Lyons in A.D. 1272 ; (2) that the three with two horns may represent either the three grades of the priesthood, or more probably the three more powerful monastic orders, Benedictines, Carthusians, and Cistercians. All these, from Dante's standpoint (*Par.* xi. 124-139, xxi. 129-142, xxii. 74-84), were corrupted by their wealth. This interpretation has at least the merit of harmonising with the symbolism of *Par.* xii. 106. For the four orders who divided Western Christendom between them, almost every city assigning to them its Black Friars or its White Friars, see the *Creed of Piers Plowman*.

¹⁴⁸⁻¹⁶⁰ The closing scene of the vision is somewhat easier to interpret. There is a *consensus* of interpreters that the harlot is the Curia Romana, impersonated in Boniface VIII. ; that the giant lover is Philip le Bel of France ; that the blows which he inflicts on her represent the outrages of Anagni (*C.* xx. 86) ; that the dragging of the chariot through the woods answers to the Babylonian captivity of the Popes at Avignon. The two points which remain obscure are (1) the mutual embraces of the giant and the harlot, which seem at variance with the long conflict between Philip and Boniface ; (2) the glance at Dante which turned those embraces into jealousy and suspicion. The explanation is, however, not far to seek. There was a time, and it was precisely that of the date of the vision in 1300, the year of Jubilee, when the Pope and the King were for a time reconciled. Boniface had been accepted as arbitrator between Philip and Edward I. France sent her pilgrims and her offerings to Rome. In inviting Charles of Valois to act as pacificator of Italy and tempting him

And that his prize might not from him be won,
 I saw a giant there, who stood erect,
 And many a kiss each gave the other one;
 But when her lustful, wandering eyes direct
 On me she turned, forthwith her lover rude 155
 Scourged her from head to foot as one suspect;
 Then, full of jealous doubt and wrathful mood,
 He loosed the monstrous form, and through the glade
 Dragged it, until I found in that same wood
 Shield from that harlot and the beast new-made. 160

CANTO XXXIII

*Beatrice—The Interpreter of the Vision—The fourfold River
 of Paradise—Eunoe and the New Birth*

“*Deus, venerunt gentes,*” thus in strain
 Alternate, three and four, sweet psalmody,
 The ladies then began to weep amain,

with the crown of Sicily, Boniface appeared to be leaning on a French alliance as against the Empire. In Milman's language (*L. C.* vii. 88), “The embers of that fatal controversy between the king of France and Boniface, which were hereafter to blaze up into such ruinous conflagration, were smouldering unregarded, and to all seeming utterly extinguished. Philip, the brother of Charles of Valois, might appear the dearest and most obedient son of the Church.” Nor is the solution of the other problem far to seek. We need not suppose, as some commentators have done, that Dante means by himself the Italian people, or the laity of Christendom, or the Ghibelline party as such. When the contest broke out again, Dante's sympathies (*C.* xx. 86-90) were with the Pope against Philip. Boniface, with warm professions of friendship, recognised Albert of Austria as Emperor, dismissed his French supporters, and fell back on the Italians. It is probable enough that Dante, who mixed so freely and took so prominent a share in the political movements of the time, may have had some part in determining the new tendencies, probable also that he magnified that part, and persuaded himself that Philip's jealousy was the result of his influence with the Pope. The two last lines may, I conceive, point to the fact that Dante had found a shelter for a time in the very forest—the kingdom of France—to which the chariot had been dragged.

1-15 *Ps.* lxxix., which occurs in the Matins of the *Rom. Brev.* for Thursday, and of which we have the first words, adapted itself naturally to the evils of the time with which the last Canto had ended. The outrage of Anagni, the persecution of the Templars, the lawlessness that prevailed

And Beatrice, breathing many a sigh,
 And sad, in such wise listening stood, her hue
 With Mary's pallor at the Cross might vie ;
 But when the others from their song withdrew,
 Then standing up to speak, aloud cried she,
 And answer made, all fiery-red to view :

" *Modicum, et non videbitis me* 10

Et iterum Ah ! listen, sisters dear :

Modicum, et vos videbitis me."

Then placing all the seven in front of her,
 And beckoning only, bade me next to move,
 Me and the lady, and that poet-seer. 15

So she passed on, nor deem I that above
 Ten steps she onward went, ere with her eyes
 She rested on mine own with light of love,
 And with calm aspect, "Come more quickly," cries ;
 "So if it be my will to speak with thee, 20
 Thou mayst be near to hear what I advise."

And when I drew nigh, as was meet for me,
 She said, "My brother, wherefore art not bold
 To question, now thou hast my company?"

And as with those whom too much awe doth hold, 25
 Who, when they speak to men of greater might,
 Scarce from their teeth their living speech unfold,

in Rome as the "widowed city," might all be read in between the lines of the great dirge-psalm. As the first renewed the scene of Calvary (C. xx. 87), so Beatrice becomes as the *Mater dolorosa*, or Lady of Sorrows, weeping by the Cross. But she rises from her sorrow with the glow of righteous anger, and has a word of hope, such as had comforted the disciples of the Christ. Wisdom and truth seemed to have left the world for a time, but after a "little while" they would be seen again, and the tyranny would be overpast (*John* xvi. 16-22).

¹⁵ Statius is still with Dante and Matilda, possibly as representing the element of culture which suffered in the sufferings of the Church, and sympathised with them (C. xxii. 86).

¹⁷ The ten steps are probably, as a certain for an uncertain number, the symbol of the "little while" of which Beatrice had spoken, or possibly may point to the interval between the election of Clement V. in 1305 and 1314, when Dante was expecting the triumph of Henry VII., and with it the restoration of the Church to Rome. As being a perfect number, it represented a period fixed by Divine appointment (*Conv.* ii. 15).

²³ Beatrice addresses Dante in the same terms as Matilda (C. xxix. 15). The lover has become the brother.

So chanced it with me that my voice aright
 I scarce could frame. "Dear lady, what I seek
 Thou knowest, and what best may give me light." ³⁰
 Then she to me: "From shame and shrinking weak
 I wish thee now thyself to extricate,
 So that no more as dreamer thou mayst speak.
 Know that the car the serpent broke of late
 Was and is not; let him that's guilty know ³⁵
 God's vengeance fears no sop that bars its hate.
 The eagle shall not always heirless go,
 That to the chariot left his plumèd wings,
 Whence it a monster, then a prey did grow.
 Surely I see, and sight true utterance brings, ⁴⁰
 The stars already near the appointed hour,
 And knowing not delays nor hinderings,
 When the Five Hundred, Five, and Ten, with power
 As sent from God, shall slay that harlot vile,
 And with her, too, her giant paramour. ⁴⁵

³¹ The fear and trembling of *H. ii.* 34-39, which Dante feels to be, as it were, his besetting infirmity, are with him at the sight of the new evils that were coming on the Church as they had been at the beginning of his pilgrimage.

³⁵ The words are an echo of *Rev.* xvii. 9, but with a widely different application. The car which the dragon had rent asunder, the visible Church of Christ, was for a time among the things of the past. The Church at Avignon was but a counterfeit mockery of that of Rome, but vengeance should fall on him who had wrought the evil.

³⁶ The words imply a singular Italian superstition. It was believed that if a murderer, within eight days of the death of his victim, ate a morsel of bread or meat over his grave, he would escape all punishment. During those days, accordingly, the friends of the murdered man kept strict watch over the grave (*Faur.* i. 535). Corso Donati was said to have acted on this belief (*Benv. in Scart.*), as also Charles of Anjou after the execution of Conradin (*Bocc. in Arriv.* p. 84).

³⁷ Dante looked on Frederick II. (*Conv.* iv. 3) as the last true Emperor; Rudolph, Adolph, and Albert never came to Italy, and were therefore only nominally kings of the Romans (*C.* vi. 69-105). The question whether the words point (1) to Henry of Luxemburg as the destined heir, or (2) to some yet future successor, depends on the date we assign to the composition of this Canto. I incline to (1), but admit that some passages in the *Purgatory* may be of later date than the death of Henry (1314).

⁴³ As a student of the Apocalypse (*Rev.* xiii. 18) reproducing its forms, Dante also has a mystic number. In the Roman numerals for 515 (DVX.) he finds the promise of a hero-reformer who shall be the minister of Divine justice. On the assumption of the earlier date of the *Purgatory*, Henry of Luxemburg, of whom Dante speaks in his epistles as almost a new Messiah

Perchance my speech, obscure and dark awhile,
 As Sphinx or Themis, may persuade thee less,
 Because, like them, it clouds the mind awhile.
 But soon events shall be the Naiades,
 Who shall the great enigma make full clear, 50
 Nor dearth nor murrain on our nation press.
 Note this, and just as thou my words dost hear,
 So teach thou them to those who live, yet lead
 A life which unto death doth swiftly bear.
 And when thou writest, take thou then good heed 55
 Not to conceal that thou the plant hast seen
 Which now twice o'er hath felt the plunderer's
 greed.

(*Frat. O. M.* iii. 464-474), presents himself as the promised DUX. On that of the later we have to turn to the prince round whom Dante's hopes crystallised after Henry's death, Can Grande of Verona (the "Greyhound", probably, of *H.* i. 101), who was recognised as the leader of the Imperial party in 1318. The language of *Par.* xvii. 76-93 shows how high were the hopes which the poet had formed of him. One writer has found in the initials of his name, giving a numerical value to each letter of the Italian alphabet analogous to that which is familiar to us in Greek, though not identical with it (Can Grande della Scala, *Signore de Verona*), the number 515. The conjecture (*Butl.*) that the number gives the years between the revival of the Western Empire in Charlemagne (799) and the election of Louis of Bavaria (1314) is hardly, I think, tenable, in spite of the fact that the latter year witnessed the deaths of Philip the Fair and Clement V. What Dante gives is obviously the "number of a man," not the duration of a period. The slaughter of the harlot and her lover means, of course, not the death of an individual Pope or King, but the triumph of the ideal Emperor, or other "Messenger of God," over the alliance of the Papal Curia and the House of Valois.

⁴⁷ Another Ovidian reminiscence. The oracles of Themis were sought by Deucalion and Pyrrha after the deluge, and she answered in dark sayings (*Met.* i. 347-415). The Sphinx and the Naiades point to the story of Œdipus, but the latter name rises out of a curious misreading. The true reading of *Met.* vii. 759 is—

*"Carmina Laiades non intellecta priorum
 Solverat ingeniis,"*

where Laiades=son of Laius=Œdipus, but the MSS. of Ovid for the most part gave the reading *Naiades* and *Solvunt*, and Dante accepted the reading and assumed that the Naiades also were prophetesses, as indeed, with less excuse, not a few commentators have done after him, and compares them with the facts which will make the mysterious prediction plain. Themis, in Ovid, sends a blight on the crops and a murrain on the cattle (*Met.* vii. 763-765).

⁵⁶ The tree is the forbidden tree or the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (*C.* xxxii. 87), but it is also the polity of the theocratic Empire with which the Church had been united. That had been twice spoiled—once as

He who despoils or plunders it, I ween,
 Offends his God in blasphemy of fact,
 Who for His own use made it pure and clean. 60
 For biting that, five thousand years exact,
 Or more, the first soul paid of longing pain,
 For Him who on Himself avenged the act.
 Thy spirit slumbers if it see not plain
 That for some great cause it was raised so high, 65
 And in its summit so transformed again;
 And, if the vain thoughts of thy mental eye
 Had not become to thee as Elsa's spring,
 Their joy, as Pyramus at the mulberry,
 Such facts alone to thee would knowledge bring 70
 Of the deep moral meaning of the tree,
 And show God just in His prohibiting.
 But since thy understanding shows to me
 As turned to stone and petrified in hue,
 So that my speech's brightness dazzles thee, 75

in the scriptural history of Adam; once by the giant, *i.e.*, by the kings of the House of Valois. To attack the true ideal empire, the divinely appointed order for the government of man, is an acted blasphemy (*Mon. ii. 10*).

62 In what sense, we ask, was Adam's sin like that of Philip the Fair? The parallel seems to us far fetched, but from Dante's standpoint there was in each case the root-sin of disobedience to a Divine commandment. The chronology deserves a passing notice. In *Par. xxvi. 119* the years of Adam's life are given from *Gen. v. 5* as 930; those between his death and the descent into Hades as 4302, giving 5232 in all. Ussher's reckoning, with which we are familiar, would give 4036, but Dante, with most mediæval scholars, followed the computation of Eusebius. Brunetto Latini (*Tres. i. 42*) reckons 5254 years from the creation to the birth of Christ.

65 The growth of the tree is explained. The ideal empire expands as it grows, and its topmost branches are the widest spread.

68 Elsa is a tributary of the Arno, rising near Siena. Its waters are calcareous, and rapidly deposit a crust of carbonate of lime on objects immersed in them. So had Dante's vain thoughts encrusted and obscured his clearer vision. Even after the discipline of Purgatory and the water of Lethe, spiritual discernment still needed growth. He was waiting for the waters of Eunoe.

69 Was the comparison suggested by the rhyme, or was the story, already referred to (*C. xxvii. 37-39*), growing in the poet's mind into an allegory? Pyramus had stained the mulberry with his blood (*Met. iv. 55-166*); Dante had stained the whiteness of his soul with earthly and sensual thoughts (*l. 74*).

72 The "moral" meaning is to be taken in its strictest sense as the third of the four senses in which Scripture might be interpreted. The tree might

I will that, though unwrit, yet painted true,
 Thou carry back what now is in thy mind,
 As pilgrims, palm in hand, their way pursue."
 And I: "As wax that with the seal is signed,
 Which changeth not the figure there imprest, 80
 Thy signet on my brain is well defined.
 But why so far beyond my vision rest
 Thy words I hoped my longing thirst would cool,
 That more is lost the more the search is prest?"
 "That thou mayst know," she said, "how stands that
 school 85
 Which thou hast followed, and its doctrines scan,
 And learn how far it follows my true rule,
 And see how far apart from God's thy plan,—
 As far as is from earth that highest sphere
 Whose movements swiftest, widest circle span." 90

have, besides a literal, an allegorical, and an anagogic or mystic meaning (*Conv.* ii. 1; *Ep. to C. G.* c. 7). The "moral" meaning is that man is shut out from the fruit of the tree of knowledge, of the highest wisdom, till his soul is purified for its reception.

76 The poet's *apologia* for his dark sayings. He cannot write as he would; he can only report what he has seen and heard, as showing where he had been.

78 The palm-branch which the pilgrim bore round his staff was to prove that he had been at the Holy Sepulchre and was entitled to his pardon or indulgence. So the ground enclosed by the cloisters of Wells Cathedral was known in the 13th and 14th centuries at once as the Palm and the Pardon churchyard, from the station at which pilgrims deposited the former and received the latter.

79 What the potter's wheel was to Jeremiah (xviii. 1-10), that the figure of the wax and seal was to Dante (*C.* x. 45; *Conv.* i. 8, ii. 10; *Mon.* ii. 2). There is, perhaps, a point of contact with his medical studies in his making the brain the special organ of the mind, the *commune sensorium* which receives and combines the impressions conveyed through the senses.

82 The scholar half complains that the words of his mistress are as yet too hard for him. A conjectural emendation gives *disviata*=out of the common track, for *disiata*=desired; but the text seems preferable.

85 The "school" which Dante had for a time followed was that of a philosophy which was not Christian, which, beginning with Beethius and Cicero, passed on to Aristotle as expounded by Averrhoes (*Conv.* ii. 13). Through Aquinas, probably also through St. Bernard and Hugh and Richard of St. Victor, he had learnt a truer system. The teaching of Beatrice led him to a mystical theology which was higher even than the dogmatic theology of Aquinas.

88-90 A reminiscence of 1 *Cor.* ii. 14 and *Isai.* lv. 8, 9. The "highest sphere" is the *Primum Mobile*, endowed, in the Ptolemaic system, with a rapidity of movement beyond all others.

And then I answered: "Memory writes not here
That I have ere estranged myself from thee,
Nor doth my conscience wake remorseful fear."

"Nay, if thou failest so in memory,"

She answered, smiling, "call thou this to mind, 95
How that this day thy Lethe-draught was free;
And as in smoke the proof of fire we find,
This thy oblivion proveth all too well
Guilt in thy will to other things inclined.

Henceforth my words in very deed shall tell 100

The naked truth, as far as, in thy case,
'Tis meet thy rude gaze on their beauties dwell."
Brighter at once and slower in its pace,
The sun was holding the meridian bright,
Which shifts or here or there with change of 105
place,

When the seven ladies halted full in sight,
As halteth one who goes in front as guide,
If on some object strange his glances light,

Just on a dim dark shadow's border-side,
Shade such as, with swarth boughs and foliage 110
green,

O'er their cold streams the Alps throw far and wide.

⁹¹ There is a touch almost of humour both in the defence and the reproof. Dante had drunk of Lethe, and this explained his unconsciousness of offence; but Lethe implied previous transgressions, and those transgressions had left their impress, not as yet effaced, in a lack of spiritual discernment.

¹⁰⁰ Were the words of *John* xvi. 25 floating in Dante's memory?

¹⁰³ The words point literally to the fact that it was noonday in spring, when the day lengthens, and the apparent motion of the sun is therefore slower. Line 105 points to the fact that every place on the earth has, according to its longitude, its own meridian. Below the surface there is probably the thought that the Sun of Divine Truth is now seen by him in greater brightness and yet more gradually revealed to him than before, and perhaps also that the aspect of that Truth varies with the standpoint of the observer.

106-111 Beatrice and her seven handmaids move on to the bank of another river, Eunoe, overshadowed with thick trees. Have we another reminiscence of Vallombrosa (C. xxviii. 25) or Campaldino? (*H.* xxxii. 4), or more recent memories of Switzerland or Mont Cenis?

Euphrates, Tigris, both in front were seen :

Their course I seemed from one clear fount to trace,
Like dear friends, slow to leave a space between.

"O light, O glory of the human race ! 115

What stream is this that from one source doth bear
Two streams, and from itself doth flow apace ? "

And to my quest came answer, "Let thy prayer
Matilda ask to tell thee ;" and reply

Came, as of one who from blame sets him clear, 120
From that fair lady's lips : "These things have I,
And much else, told him, and full clear I see
That Lethe hath not hid them from his eye."

And Beatrice : "Deeper cares, may be,
Which often Memory of her strength deprive, 125
Have clouded o'er his mental vision free.

But see, Eunoë's waters hence derive ;

Lead him to them, and, as thou'rt wont to do,
Once more his half-dead energy revive."

¹¹² The description is taken partly from *Gen.* ii. 10-14, but the flowing of Euphrates and Tigris (Hiddekel), as distinguished from Pison and Gihon from one source, may have been derived from *Boeth.* v. 1—"Tigris et Euphrates uno se fonte resolvunt."

¹¹⁵ The words are an echo of *H.* ii. 76-78. There, however, the words seem to apply more to the personal, here to the transfigured and mystic, Beatrice.

¹¹⁹ We note that this is the first and last time that Dante's guide and companion is named. So, it will be remembered, it had been with his own name (*C.* xxx. 55). She pleads that her task is already done (*C.* xxviii. 43, 148).

¹²⁴ What were the "greater cares"? The mysteries of the apocalyptic visions of *C.* xxxi., xxxii., the adoring love of Beatrice, his own desire for Paradise—all these have been suggested, each, it may be, with some element of truth.

¹²⁷ What was needed was a fresh baptism, not in the stream of oblivion of evil, but in that which revived all memories of good, and cleared the vision of the soul to gather into one all the partial perceptions of truth and striving after holiness which had entered into the pilgrim's past life, and to see that they have been "wrought in God" (*John* iii. 21). In this work Matilda, the type of the cheerful and genial sympathy, which is a potent element in the therapeutics of the soul, lends, as before with Lethe (*C.* xxxi. 100), a helping hand. In the description of her manner ("*donnescamente*") I can scarcely help seeing a reminiscence of the fair blithe lady of the *V. N.* c. 8, whom I have identified with Matilda. And what was done for him was done also for Statius the poet, to whom he felt bound by the ties of a closer brotherhood, as in that communion of saints from which Virgil was excluded, than to any other.

As gentle soul whom ne'er excuse withdrew 130
 From others' will, but takes it as its own,
 Soon as 'tis patent made by token true,
 Soon as my hands she clasped, that beauteous one
 Moved on, and as a gracious lady spake
 To Statius, saying, "With him come thou on." 135
 Could I, O reader, wider limits take
 For writing, I might hope to sing in part
 Of that sweet drink which ne'er my thirst could
 slake ;
 But since I've filled each corner of my chart,
 To this my second cantique given as due, 140
 My course is checked by bridle of my art.
 I from that stream that holy is and true
 Returned refreshed, as tender flowerets are
 Revived and freshened with a foliage new,
 Pure and made meet to mount where shines each
 star. 145

137 There is a certain abruptness in the close of the *Purgatory* for which this is the excuse. The poet is writing according to a fixed plan. He cannot allow himself more than thirty-three cantos; the canto may not much exceed 150 lines. All that he can say is, as once before, *Incipit Vita Nova* (*V. N. c. 1*). There is a new birth, a new springtide in his life. New thoughts bud and blossom. The time has come when he can not only see the stars as in *H. xxxiv. 139*, but mount up to them, so passing from the earthly to the heavenly Paradise. Measured by the notes of outward time, he has been twenty-four hours in Hell, four days and nights on the Mountain of Purgatory.

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